September 8th 1930

Monks House
Rodmell

Monday
8th Sept.

I will signalise my return to life—that is writing—by beginning a new book, & it happens to be Thoby's birthday, I remark. He would have been, I think, 50 today. After coming out here I had the usual—oh how usual—headache; & lay, like a fibre of tired muscle on my bed in the sitting room, till yesterday. Now up again & on again; with one new picture in my mind; my defiance of death in the garden.

But the sentence with which this book was to open ran "Nobody has ever worked so hard as I do"—exclaimed in drawing a paper fastener through the 14 pages of my Hazlitt just now. Time was when I dashed off these things all in the days work. Now, partly because I must do them for America & make arrangements for ahead, I spend I daresay a ridiculous amount of time, more of trouble on them. I began reading Hazlitt in January I think. And I am not sure that I have smeared that little seal in the middle—that marrow—which is one's object in criticism. A very difficult [illegible] no doubt to find it, in all these Essays; so many; so short; & on all subjects. Never mind; it shall go today; & my appetite for criticism is, oddly, whetted. I have some gift that way, were it not for the grind & the screw & the torture.

Vita comes tomorrow: we go to Sissinghurst on Wednesday: I shall attack The Waves on Thursday. So this illness has meant two weeks break—

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but as I often think, seasons of silence, & brooding, & making up much more than one can use, are fertilising. I was taking my brain too hard.

Anyhow, this is the happiest summer since we had Monks House: the most satisfactory. We think too on Percy's evidence — P. was hedging old Hawkes words on Grace — that the Byngs Stamper farm has been bought by a homeseeker, & all the land is to be under grass — not bungalows. And Annie surpasses one daily with her amenity, dexterity & sympathy — the most convincing argument in favour of living out that I know. Yesterday I sent an advertisement to Time & Tide — but hush! Profound secrecy is essential. The weather is September weather, bright, sunny, cool. We have a project of making my bedroom the sitting room — for the view — to let it waste, day after day, seems a crime: Elderly eyes cannot waste. No. I would like to have another life, & live it in action. So I thought, looking at Caburn, & imagining the feelings of a strong young man, who was walking up it, with wife & children, & a career in the City. I think — No he was a politician; & I think he was also an Indian Civil Servant. He was not a writer: There are the stories one invents. And this: "At the age of 50 Priestley will be saying "Why dont the highbrows admire me?" It isn't true that I only write for money." He will be enormously rich; but there will be that thorn in his shoe — or so I hope. Yet I have not read, & I daresay shall never read, a book by Priestley. And I (to solace myself) get a letter from a Mr Spender saying he cares for my praise more than for that of any critic — & he sends me his poems. And I invent this phrase for Bennett & Priestley "the Tradesmen of letters"

280
120

116
280

29,1 80 (the ~~am~~ length of the Waves at this moment — a 3ro. dose, I suppose)

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Wednesday 24th Sept

I have taken up my staff again; I wish I could say that my book was my staff; but oh dear, how many people I have seen — dashing that support from my hand! It must have been the afternoon I wrote this — yes, because L. & Percy were in the middle of moving the furniture into the root sitting room — that Mary & Barbara's like medicine bottle heads appeared at the window. How I howled! And then, there was Alice Ritchie, then the Woolves, then Morgan, then a party at Charleston, then London, & then those curious women, Miss Ibbotson & Mrs Starr.

"I am a cousin of Florence Nightingale" said Mrs Starr. When I said I was also related, her rather shifty eyes became shiftier. "I cant make omelettes" said Miss Ibbotson, addressing herself plaintively & at the same time peevishly to Mrs Starr. "It would be a great disaster of course if you sent in your dishes all burnt" said Mrs Starr. "You would give me notice" I suppose" said Miss Ibbotson. Miss Ibbotson was bankrupt; "Beggars cant be choosers" she said, "& so thats why I'm back again at <u>this</u>." Miss Ibbotson had once owned two motor cars & driven them for hire in London, but competition with the men had been too much. She had also been ill. She was skinny, raddled; wore a small corduroy jacket, & a rather dirty white shirt; had a red pockethandkerchief, thick mended stockings & thick shoes. Mrs Starr was dressed in blue Liberty silk &

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a straw hat. She reproved Mrs I. for being too diffident. "If I could have a treat" Mrs I. repeated. "But you will soon lick Ns[?]" said Mrs S: "I cant do fancy cooking" said Mrs I: "And I would like to do some of the cleaning." "I shall do the cleaning" said Mrs S: "& you will do the kitchen." These remarks were shot at each other, & plainly represented much previous argument, though why Mrs S: so compact, it sly, had come into touch with Mrs I. so wild, with her staring blue eyes & her wideawake, I could not say. An indefinable aroma of sordidity, instability, shadiness, shiftiness pervaded them. They were sure, I think almost at once, that we had seen through them, & that the place was not for them. "We live on salads" said Mrs S. though I am not a vegetarian." Sure enough the brown holland bag which they left behind them contained a number of lettuces wrapped in paper.

Miss Rivett-Carnac is the scion of a great India family who let her live in Wimbledon with her mother on a pound a week. She has been through a good deal: social work: hostels: running clubs. She is about 35: a perfect lady, enough to be cavalier of everyone: only anxious for shelter, a wage, & a little time to herself. She might do — she might be a superior Walter. She has, oh dear, suffered much — and is perhaps. vengeful, acid, worn, thirsty, starved of happiness.

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Could anything be done to make us less popular? we ask. For instance if I fired Leonards hair — would that make his mother, Bella, Tom, Harold, Dorothy Bussy, Ellie Rendel & Ka Cox refuse to invite themselves to see us?

When I offered ~~Offering~~ Mrs Rivett-Carnac £50 yesterday it seemed to me nothing, because I was thinking that I can make that by writing 2,000 words. But 5 years ago, £50 was a substantial sum. How money has shrunk in my mind! This is one of the most curious things in my existence — the shrinkage of money.

A perfect September day, after some very imperfect November days: the swallows skimming the terrace; Percy asking if it will be fine tomorrow: No, he will mow the lawn. The bees are reported to have been busy. In that case we shall take honey tonight. L. & P. spent the afternoon — Trim & Uncle Toby — mending the fence: I spent it walking the downs. I still have the habit of building a perfect sketch, & by juggling a little, can convert distant houses into haystacks.

I am reading Dante; & my present view of reading is to elongate immensely. I take a week over one canto. No hurry.

Our friends work us very hard. Here's Tom Eliot: when are you back? Here's Mrs Bartlett, may we come to tea. Here's — & my two months are absolutely nibbled at by all who choose. I think I will spend August next year in Northumberland.

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Monday Sept. 29th

So all these days were completely ruined by the ~~accident~~ assiduity of our friends. When one has to tidy the table, pick fresh flowers, collect chairs & be ready, at 4, or at one, to welcome, & all the rest of it the circumjacent parts of the day are ruined. On the whole L's family do the trick most thoroughly. Everything is such an effort; so unreal: what I say is so remote from what I feel: their standards are so different from mine: I strain myself perpetually with trying to provide the right cakes. the right jokes. the right affection & influence. Naturally it often goes wrong, as on Friday. Harold, who is to me the most sympathetic of them, told a story of the Woolf temper: how Philip had broken down the servants bedroom door in a rage, because ~~that~~ they had put a bottle, unfastened, into Bab's bed, & refused to come & make it. Mrs W. who is the vainest of women (poor old lady — yes, one feels of poor old woman charms; & muddles at one's feelings of her egotism, her vanity) took this as a slur upon herself; & began querulously & peevishly to defend her methods of education, & to pay herself the usual compliments upon her wonderful management of so many fatherless & penniless children. And then of course she requires to have these praises corroborated, & will not be satisfied until I have also wondered & exclaimed at her amazing unselfishness & courage & agreed that the Woolf temper is merely a proof of their intelligence. Here of course, I begin to see

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very placidly how ugly, how noisy, how irreparably
middle class they all are. Indeed, my aesthetic
sense is the one that protests most obstinately — how
they cheapen the house & garden — How they bring in
an atmosphere of Earls Court & hotels, how impossibly
out of place, & stuffy & tiring & dreary & dowdy
they look on the terrace, among apple trees &
vegetables & flowers! But there I am
pinned down, as firmly as Prometheus on his
rock, to have my day, Friday 26th of September 1930,
pecked to pieces, & made cheap & ugly &
commonplace; for the sting of it is that there is
no possible escape — no escape that wont make
old Mrs Woolf begin to dab her eyes & feel
that she is not being welcomed — she who is so
"painfully sensitive" — so fond of cakes, so
lonely, so entirely
incapable of amusing herself, so
without any interest in my feelings or friends; so
vampire like & vast in her demand for
my entire attention & sympathy, while she sits
over the fire, in her dreary furs & ugly bonnet &
large boots, with her pendulous cheeks & red
nose & cheap ear rings talking about
Worthing & the charms of Dr Watson & the
niceness of everybody, & how she will come to
Worthing every year, & will expect to come
Lord lord! how
~~over~~ to tea with us.
many daughters have been murdered by women
like this! — What a net of falsity & they
spread over life — how it rots beneath their
sweetness — goes brown & soft like a bad pear!

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at the same time I cannot make out a case for myself as a maltreated person. No, because I have an interest beyond my own nose. But let me note that old age ~~must~~ can only be made tolerable by having a firm anchor outside gossip, cakes & sympathy. Think of imposing even one afternoon of such a burden upon Quentin Julian Angelica! I shall spend my day at the British Museum. [This is one of those visual images, without meaning when written down, that conveys a whole state of mind to me]

Rodmell is full of incident, drama, & sometimes I think, coming home over the flats, of beauty & solemnity. Mr Fears the epileptic died on Thursday. He had been locked in his room for weeks; but escaped, made off to Southease, & called on the Thomases to present his "grievance" to the Rector. One of his grievances was that Mrs Dedman had stolen part of his garden — & his seed — & I can believe it — that this was no figment. There she stands in the street, ominous, glum, predatory, gossiping, complaining. Then a doctor taps at the window: someone has been taken ill in the street & carried into a cottage. It was the mother of Mrs Emery the dog breeder. She is now dying perhaps, & her husband must be taken for a motor drive while they are burying Mr Fears to distract him from the thought of death. This the most miserable of days, cold & drizzling. the flowers sodden: the leaves falling: the apples fallen: mist hiding Caburn. Yet I have written well, & cannot make out a case for myself as a maltreated person. The great game of diplomacy is begun with Nelly. I have told Dr McGlashan that we will pay her wages, but not have her back till she is well.

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Sat. Oct. 11th

The ~~forty~~ fifty coffins have just trundled by, in lorries. spread rather skimpily with Union Jacks — an unbecoming ~~pall~~ pall — & stuck about with red & yellow wreaths. The only impressive sight was the rhythmical bending backward & slow march of the guards: for the rest, the human face is often pouch marked & ignoble: poor women look bored & twitch their noses; the crowd smells: the sun makes it all too like birthday cakes & crackers; & the ~~[illegible]~~ coffins conceal two men — one bone, one charred hand, wd. have done what no ceremony can do: & the heap of a ~~&~~ ceremony ceremony can do: in one little coal [illegible] presses uneasily. I refer to the burial this morning of the 48 ~~heroes~~ 'heroes' of the R101. But why 'heroes'? A shifty & unpleasant man, Lord Thompson by all accounts, goes for a joy ride with other notables, & has the misfortune to be burnt at Beauvais. Thank heaven so, we have every reason to say God how very thankful — how very unlucky. Looking at all the shops in Oxford St & Southampton Row stud-dabbling black dresses only & run up black bars; why the Nation should be expected to think of nothing else: why the people should line the streets & parade through Westminster Hall, why poor Baker should be fitted with nobility & lamentable & prance, why the Germans should mumble & prance, why the French ordain a their wreaths & the French ordain a day of mourning & the footballers stop for two minutes silence — beats me & Leonard & Miss Strachan.

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And then? Whether we ~~have~~ ^wonder^ are reflecting where we shall but next in what strange country of this extraordinary world we shall explore next — ~~shall we~~ ~~the [illegible]~~ Christina — in a way people have in biographies — suddenly take the matter into her own hand. Then as if the fish that we have been watching, as it slides in and out the reeds & rocks, of the pool gaze, turned upon us, & making straight for the glass, gave us such a blow with its nose or tail that the glass broke. Then an — what What happened was this. Mrs Virtue Tebbs gave a party.

And here, ^chiefly as a means of passing time,^ to pass time, one might reflect. But this speaking of poetry is — one that has never been settled. ~~The poets themselves are~~ There are hardly any good critics of poetry in the language. Take your own case — People differed very much about your poetry. ~~It was not~~ It was returned repeatedly by editors for any space. In truth your success was feeble indeed, you never made more than £10 a [illegible] in [illegible]. ~~People~~ Jean Ingelow's works went into 8 editions. Yours never did that. People compared you with [illegible] Now dismiss editors & Bessie Parkes. the public; & turn to the ~~great game of~~ people of small distinction; we do indeed find

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Wednesday. Oct. 15th

I say to myself "But I cannot write another word". I say "I will cut adrift—I will go to Rouen in France—I will sit on pavements & drink coffee—I will see the southern hills: I will dream: I will take my mind out of its iron cage & let it swim—this fine October." I say all this; with energy: but shall I do it? Shant I peter out here, till the fountain fills again? Oh dear oh dear—for the comradeship of the spirit! Rarely rarely comest thou now, Spirit of delight. You hide grossly up there behind the hotel windows & the grey clouds. [I am writing this with a steel pen & which I dip in the ink, so as to forestall the day when my German pens are extinct] This dismal to broach October so languidly. I rather think the same thing happened last year. I need solitude. I need space. I need air. I need the empty fields round me; & my legs pounding along roads; & sleep; & animal existence. My brain is too energetic; it works; it throws off an article on Christina Rossetti; & girds itself up to deal with this & that.

Rowett is installed. And she looks like a freehanded lady. Light Mitchely Dukes arrive. This is only our second day. & Annie, inevitably happy garrulous & anxious to stay—how can I put up with Rodmell now, she says— I shall feel shut up inside something.—Annie goes today.

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curious little interlude then. Alas, one day last week Nelly appeared — of course on her best behaviour — very much the old & trusted servant, with, I think, a dash of suspicion. Why did I not have her back & give her help, seeing that she had been with us 15 years? — that I think was in her mind. But we kept it down; & she is off to Colchester for 10 days & then — oh dear, I say again, oh dear. Nessa & Duncan are at Cassis, which brings the delicious known of France too near me — Oh to walk among vineyards I cry again. And lots of people are on the buzz: Dined last night with Raymond, a shabby & dimmished Raymond, whom I like better than the dashing. Not much wine & so on. He has given up parties & takes Wyndham Lewis much to heart: "A middle aged man-milliner" said Lewis in that pamphlet which is like the gossip & spite & bickering of a suburban housemaid who has been given notice & is getting a bit of her own back.

18th Oct. But behold, I think the spirit of delight is hovering over me, after 2 days at Rodmell. In spite of Ethel Smyth, in spite of Emmie Fisher — two teasing & tormenting letters from them were, of course, forwarded. But we walked to Lewes over the fields — yes, reached our goal, came out under that tunnel: now I have planned the walk for almost 20 years & never taken it. Home now, & find another letter, thakems remorseful for Ethel, & Tom's new edition of Johnson. & Eve so many flowers.

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22nd Oct.

Just back from headache cheating — there should be a name for these peregrinations — at Hampton Court. My misery at the rose & yellow leaves, & the sniper coming in & I not there or I not there — drove me to take a day off: indeed to plan 2 days off: but no: it rains now; & I'm for the fire.

My misery is Leonard's. Rivett cant work. Poor woman! Bowed down with a sense of her failure after life, creeping broken winged, avid, & deprecating diffident. She lends us meagre Javanese dishes & attempts nervous combinations of tapioca & rage. No, no: so she must. And then I think Annie — for Ever. But the misery of these triples can be devastating. Brown sole. brown sauce. & nothing else. And when I make a joke she laughs; as she laughed once in some tennis court to some cavalier I imagine, vainly. She is invertebrate; crushed; & what, I ask, is to become of her? And how am I to detach her seaweed clinging from my kitchen? For naturally this was a chance, a new start for her: something untried. And when I say No you cant work, she will see her hope go bang like a rabbit in a shooting gallery. And I detest these dislodgements.

Nelly again yesterday: — apprehensive & unspecious; though I think not shaken seriously in her belief that she will come back to her. Thank the Lord, it rains, & I can honestly to heal Equally now — Write her set in; draw the curtains; light the fire: & go to work.

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Oct 23rd.

Behold, the rather familiar experiment — a new pen, new ink. "I'm afraid" "Ma'am", said the youth at Partridge & Cooper. "that the Pentakalai are extinct." A voice on the telephone had spoken their doom. I went along Faringdon market this afternoon looking for the man with the barrow. I saw the grey towers of, I suppose, Smithfield. I almost went into St Pauls & saw Dr Donne, now uncovered again: but being in a fray to myself, pressed for time. I walked on, down the Strand.

Ethel came in yesterday evening; rather battered in an old moleskin coat; in the triangular hat which the hotel proprietor at Bath has made into the shape with a few pins. Well, I began to make notes of her, because, among other things — how many others — she said would I like her to leave me some of her letters — the Maggie Benson & Mrs Benson & Lady Ponsonby letters in her will? Would you like me to write something about you? I said. Oh yes; what fun! But I should try some experiment. Oh what fun! How I should enjoy it! But I should get it all wrong. Yes, of course; or tear them up — do just as you like. HB: letters I'm leaving to Maurice Baring: but he'll do nothing. He'll tear them up. So I am to some extent Ethel's literary ~~Exe~~ Executor; a post I have always vaguely desired; & so I now make a few notes on her talks, for a portrait. She would have to bring out her enormous eagerness. She was telling me how she reads travel books: & her eyes — her blue, rather prominent eyes, positively

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glitter. And she did not talk about herself, or her music—simply about how people climb—their adventures. Her cheeks burn too. But she looks now & then aged: She said that she was a very brave woman. This quality I adore. And I have it. One of the bravest things I ever did was to tell people my age. My vivacity is—Everyone thinks I'm 20 or 30 years younger. Well—[a characteristic word, indicating what really becomes necessary—a break—a new paragraph—a wedge inserted in the flood] Well—when ~~people far me~~ I wanted people to realise how long I'd waited for recognition—& have never really had it—I did that—though I hated it: I told them my age, so that they couldn't go on saying Oh but she has come into her own—she was recognised. She referred I think, but this is difficult to insert one's own wedges, to the Jubilee Concert at Berlin, on which occasion Lady Jones behaved so badly. She was on her way—is now I suppose in the train or on the ship, this cold grey day—to Belfast, to conduct her Sea Songs (one of her best things) & then, directly that's done, back she comes, across the Irish channel, & returns to Woking & goes on writing about H.B: that looming imponderable figure, who has so queer an existence: for if I ask about him Logan, Ottoline &c. say Oh a petit maitre: a drawing room philosopher: to which Logan adds the son of a dentist, & Ottoline adds: he made love to me. I found him intolerable. This was the man who dominated Ethel's life. This wraith who wanders about in

This she copied from Mrs Pankhurst

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Logan & Ethel lived. What a strange job then to write, as I may one day, the life of a woman whose past is thus nebulous. And I have only come in time to hear about the past— Everything is past. She hopes not to live another seven years; gives me to understand that now that the last barren years have been fructified by knowing me, she can sing her nunc dimittis. Since all the fiery years of desire are over— Yet I doubt if they are quite over— Yet it is a fine spectacle, & a humane one, this old woman summing up her experience & hymning her love for H.B. as a swan song (& people say an ugly ~~swan~~ song, for they say her musical genius is another delusion—all her life then has been based on illusion: & that as I perceive when I talk to her is manifestly untrue) I must now write to the living Ethel— so one's perspective shifts.

Monday 27th Oct. How comfortless & uneasy my room is—a table all choked with papers &c. I'm now spending out there again, & have perhaps an hour & a half to spend: a short time on Dante: a short time on MSS: a short time here—write another page. Yesterday we went to Warlingham & sat in a gravel pit, like a Cezanne. I made this comparison, to attempt justify myself for not being in France. And we walked along a

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bridle paths; & saw old fruit farms, a rabbit, & downs, all preserved as by a magic ring from Croydon. Never was the division between London & country so sharp. Home, & made dinner: & read MSS: But rather casually & unanimously we have decided within the last week to stop the Press. Yes – its to come to an end. That is we are to go on only with my books & L.s & Dotty's perhaps: & what we print ourselves. In short, we shall revert next October to what we were in the Hogarth House days — an odd reversal, seeing that we are now financially successful. But what's money if you sell freedom? – we say. And what's the point of publishing these innocuous novels & pamphlets that are neither good nor bad? So we make this decision, casually, walking round the Square after lunch & thus slip another shackle from our shoulders. This is what I call living with a pilot in the ship — not mere drifting ahead.

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Sunday
Nov. 2nd

And tonight the final letter to Nelly is to be sent: there it rests in my red bag, but I have great reluctance to read it over, as I had to write it. Yet I don't suppose she will mind acutely. For one thing, she has been prepared, I think, by our readiness to do without her; & then since the famous scene last November I think she has been aware of a change. These 5 months at any rate have proved that we are freer, Easier & so less comfortable, indeed more Comfortable, without her, for all her good humour, sense & cleanness; what's more that I have written the letter, see once more in their true proportions: And I am vague & in the air, because I doubt that Annie will come — doubt of the thing — wish indeed to have been out in future. Oh never again to have dinner with servants — that is my ambition — How we used to walk round the Sqr. considering Nelly's ultimatums: what hours we have spent, I should still spend. No: this is a wholesome break, & has taken 10 years off my shoulders. Ah, but shall I have to see her —

There are further notes about Nelly, since then — a. Queer letter bits of life broken off: servant psychology & so on. To my long, explicit & affectionate letter she has returned one word: Dear Mr & Mrs Woolf. Thank you for your cheque. Yrs truly.

But yesterday evening, an embittered, frightened

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angry voice, then—is perfectly describable. & by the sound she identified Nelly, was heard on the telephone. She asked for me, but I was, happily, out or down here. We conjecture that after launching her insult, she came up to consult Lottie, perhaps see Mrs Hunt, & for some reason they decided upon an interview. I imagine she has now gone back. And the sense of freedom spreads wider & wider. The letter is sent; the shock over. And I come in & find the house empty & silent.

A slight inaccuracy, if applied to the past few days. Ethel Sands & Hugh Walpole to tea on Monday; Vita Clive & Hilda Matheson to dine; Hugh again later, & his piteous, writhing & wincing & ridiculous—flaying alive story of Willie Maugham's portrait. Indeed it was a clever piece of torture; Hugh palpably exposed as the hypocritical booming thick skinned popular novelist, who lectures on young novelists & makes his own books sell: who is thick fingered & insensitive in every department. But said Hugh, turning round in his bed of thorns again & yet again, & pressing them further & further in, Thats not what I mind so much—what I mind are a few little things—little things Willie & I had together—only he & I knew—those he has put into print. Thats what I cant get over. For instance I cant tell you all the meanings those are to me in his—rages I was like a man in love with a duchess— (the meaning is that Hugh

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is in love with a male opera singer). Would you mind Virginia? (This said past midnight, we Vita & I alone) And I said I should. And he wrote to me & said he could not believe that I could be hurt. He said he had written without a thought of me. But that letter is almost worse than the book."

Clive is home blind of one eye & much in need of society. I thought him, why heaven knows, rather admirable & touching; determined not to be a burden on his friends, yet very grateful for our kindness (& I must ask him to come in tonight). So much instructed somehow in the little graces & also the inevitable loneliness, without his Mary, but then I think he has his Joan. And he cant read or write, & has hired a reader. Its the evenings that will be bad he said. Nessa characteristically writes from Cassis that she doesnt think much yet, & supposes that the spectacles, which we all wear, will put it right. And Julians poems are out, & I am relieved— but why vanity of my own critical powers? jealousy of his fame?— to hear that Vita agrees with me that for all his admirable good sense & observation & love of country life, he is no poet. People who pent words as he does rather affect me— may this to discharge me partially of vanity & jealousy. Common sense & Cambridge are not enough, whatever Bunny may say.

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8th Nov. — I pressed his hand when we said goodbye with some emotion: thinking this is to press a famous hand: It was Yeats, at Ottolines last night. He was born in 1865 so that he is now a man of 65 — & I am 48: & thus he has a right to be so much more vital, supple, high charged & altogether seasoned & generous. I was very much impressed by all this in action. He has grown very thick (last time I met him — & I may note that he has never heard of me & I was slightly embarrassed by O's pawnbrokery efforts to bring me to his notice) was in 1907 — or 8 I suppose at dinner at 46) He is very broad; very thick: like a solid wedge of oak. His face is too fat; but there is the hatchet forehead in profile, under a tangle of grey & brown hair: the eyes are luminous, direct, but obscured under glasses; they have however seen close, the vigilant & yet wondering look of his early portraits. I interrupted a long dream story of de la Mares when I came in — about seeing Napoleon with ruby eyes & so on. Yeats was off, with vehemence even, kindling & stumbling, on dreams: those which have colour are rare & mean — I forget what. De la Mare told another very long cryptic dream about a book with circles in it: the outer most ring black, the inner blue — son. Yeats identified this dream at once as the dream of the soul in some particular state — I forget what. Tagore had told him he said that he had dreamed once as a young man; & of the roused

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he could find the dream again it would become permanent. And so on to dreaming states & soul states: as others talk of Bears[?]brook & free trade — as if matters of common knowledge. So familiar was he, that I perceived that he had worked out a complete psychology, which I could only catch at momentarily in my alarming ignorance. De la M. had just been to the National Gallery, & had got no pleasure from the pictures — I said this flow & ebb of consciousness made all criticism unstable. He said one must go by the plus's always. Yeats said he could get nothing from Rembrandt, nothing from El Greco. He then explained our pleasure in pictures, or other works of art, by a elaborate metaphor, taken from his psychology; about the sharp edges of things being brought into contact; & the same order then coming in our consciousness: & thus our closest contact results from some sudden clicking to of edges, wheels — I suppose have lost the metaphor now completely. Then, discussing what poems we could come back to unsated, I said Lycidas: De la M. said no. Not Milton for him: he could never recognise his own emotions there. Milton's woodbine was not his woodbine, nor his Eve his own Eve. Yeats said he could not get satisfaction from Milton: from Latinised poetry (as somebody said, Milton had (in some way irreparably) damaged the English language). This attached itself to a cosmology evidently in which Latins & Romans play their part. And so to modern poetry, & the question of the spade — Yeats said that "we";

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de la Mare & Hardy, wrote 'thumbnail' poems only because we are at the end of an era. Here was another system of thought, of which I could only get snatch fragments. He said that the spade has been embalmed by 30 centuries of association: not so the steam roller. The ~~poets~~ great age of poetry, Shakespeare's age, was subjective: ours is objective: civilisations end when they become objectified. Poets can only write when they have defined symbols. And steam rollers are not covered in symbolism – perhaps they may be after 30 generations. He, de la Mare, can only write small fireside poems. Most of emotion is outside their scope. Wh. abt. the novelist I said – but how crude & jaunty my own theories were beside his: indeed I got a tremendous sense of the intricacy of the art; also of its meaning, its seriousness, its importance, which wholly engrosses this large active minded immensely vitalised man. Wherever one cut him, with a little question, he poured, spurted fountains of ideas. And I was impressed by his directness, his terseness. No fluff & dreaminess. Letters he said must be answered. He seemed to live in the centre of an immensely intricate brain bush: from wh. he could issue at any moment; & then withdraw again. And every twig was real to him. He also spoke about the necessity of tragedy. 'Tis necessary to attempt the impossible; but it must be possible. All creation is the result of conflict. James Stephens, some glutton

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poem he most admires, & I have never read, was so poor as a
boy that he used to pick up the bread thrown to the ducks &
eat it. There must be tragedy in order to bring out the
reverse of the soul. [this belongs to another theory about
the soul & its antitype, which I vaguely remember in his
poems] He said that Tom very cleverly made use of
mythologies, for instance the Fisherking in the Waste
land; & mythologies are necessary. Ezra Pound
writes beautifully when he uses them. Then suddenly he must
speak of — some common object — & at once his
rhythm breaks. I said we did not talk enough,
not easily & equally. He told us of men he had met in
trains. I liked his transitions to dialect & humour.
With men perhaps he might be coarse. He had been
staying with Masefield who, to celebrate the 30th
year of their friendship, had got young women to
recite Yeats's lyrics at Boars Hill. Their
voices had been too weak for the theatre; but Yeats
had been greatly touched. Judith M. is nice —
good but not pretty. Hence she will have to
marry a man she knows; not at first sight.
And Mrs M. seemed simple & he liked her
better than usual. Indeed, he seemed very cordial,
very generous; having been warmed up by his
65 years; & being in command of all his
systems, philosophies, poetries, humanities; not
tentative any more. Hence no doubt his
urbanity & generosity. Compare him with
Tom for instance, who came to tea the day

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before: & may be, for anything I know, as good a poet. Poor Tom is all suspicion, hesitation & reserve. His face has grown heavier fatter & whiter. There is a leaden sinister look about him. But oh — Vivienne! Was there ever such a torture since life began! — to bear her on ones shoulders, biting, wriggling, raving, scratching, unwholesome, powdered, insane, yet sane to the point of insanity, reading his letters, thrusting herself on us, coming in wavering trembling — Was your dog do that to frighten me? Have you visitors? Yes we have moved again. Tell me, Mrs Woolf, why do we move so often? Is it accident? That's what I want to know (all this suspiciously, cryptically, taking hidden meanings) Have some honey, made by our bees, I say. Have you any bees? (& as I say it, I know I am awaking suspicion) Not bees. Hornets. But where? Under the bed. And so on. ~~until~~ until worn out with half an hour of it, we gladly see them go. Vivienne remarked that I had made a signal that they should go. This bag of ferrets is what Tom wears round his neck.

Our second Hogarth. Yeats & de la Mare talk too much about dreams to be quite satisfactory. This is what makes de la Mare's stories (lent me by Ottoline) wobbly

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now what will happen next. when the Waves is done? I think some book of criticism; [Mrs Skiler to take away wastepaper] But I am dissatisfied with my own smart endings. I must sit out to a peak & survey the question. These are our stages.

I thought, to give this book continuity, I would copy every day the headlines in the paper. But I cant remember them.

Mr. Snowden & Labour. Armistice day celebrations: The Blazing Car murder. Princes of Wales's next Expedition. — & so on.

William Plomer is back. Nessa returns, wickedly ready to read a tribute to Clive, on Thursday. Roger too. And I cry O Solitude — & look towards Rodmell. And the weather goes on blue & balmy. And I go to the dentist, & so does Leonard. And Plewett is a nervous but clean cook — And Nelly has appealed to Dr. McGlashan. And we await development.

The other night, sitting on the floor by my side, Vita suffered considerably from jealousy of Ethel. She praised her, stoutly, but bitterly. She has all the abandonment that I living in the age of subtlety & reserve, have lost. She claims her; rushes in where I fear myself to hold back. When Hugh was here he said casually that he had met Ethel at tea. Such agony went through her She could not speak — And I noticed nothing; & in my usual blind way, made my usual mocking joke — She p. took seriously & brought out my letter for me to read.

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also, too much harried to go on with Bernard's soliloquy this morning. A very little weight on me brings me low. And Clive has been a little weight: added to the usual round; the dentist, shops, callers &c. to start with. And last night we sat through a sticky valiant evening at Hope. Hope liberated from all restraint by Lopokova was it? Hope school girlish, voluble, elated, the first time I have seen it since Janie's death. Mrs Plunket Greene there (20 years added since we met at Savage dinner party) now she is grey, pendulous; with the oddest bird technique of the head & eyes I have ever seen — for ever craning, peering, advancing; exactly like a lively arch bird of some kind. A Roman Catholic — but, when you remembered her 20 years ago, a very nice or clever woman — something too insinuating.

Nov. 12th

And I had my talk with Nelly last night. Going up to sit still for an hour, & read perhaps Dotty's poem I heard a step below, I thought, looked down the stairs & saw Nelly. So we sat for two hours. A no odd meandering contradictory, mainly affectionate & even intimate talk. One of her pre-occupations to establish her own hard lot & innocence of all offence among the servants of the clerk. We had treated her badly, turning her off because of ill health. Confronted by me, she advanced this more as an excuse, almost a joke than anything. "Still I cant understand why you wont have me back..." "But Nelly, you gave me notice 10 times in the past 6 years — 2 more.." "But I always took it back." "Yes, but that sort of thing gets on the nerves." "Oh ma'am I

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never meant to tire you - but you an bottling now it it tore you - but you wouldn't give me any help. Now Grace had all the help she wants - Well, I says. This is long ... - But then Nelly you forget that when you were Rest ... But then for 3 years I've been ill. And I shall never like any woman as much as I like you .. I & so on & so on - all the old tunes. Some so moving, so pathetic, some (I'm glad to say) so irrational hysterical & with that curious & endless reiteration of grievances which used to drive me frantic. The truth - but I could never tell her this - is that that kind of dependence - intimacy, with its gatherings, & jealousy & its intensity sometimes wears one down: a psychological strain - And then the songs. Oh I won't say how I've heard, but I've heard - . You say - - & so at last, after every variety of feeling. I was left with the one feeling No I could not have you slopping here again - to be free of this irritation this pyjamas grey hair, at all costs. None of this can be said, & the situation. Has been stormy than I feared, has its sharp edges - Poor old Nelly one thinks. Finding a place - packing up - going to Rysettys - after 18 years.

And then I let her come back, for 3 months, from Jan. 1st. How am I ever to apologise to myself sufficiently?

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23rd Nov.

Ethel yesterday marvelled in wonderment at her own genius:
"Cant think how I happened" she says, putting on my
hat, & bidding me observe what a nutshell it is
on top of the gigantic brow.

Another observation, based on pardon at Rhondda lunch
with Harold: given dukes I could soon dine & lunch every day &
get so early the hang get that it mattered nothing. And so
would have no point.

30th Nov.

"Oh I have had so much unhappiness in my life" said
Mary, sobbing "What been so dangerous, so
difficult. How I envy you!"

2nd. Dec.

No I cannot write that very difficult passage in The
Waves this morning (how their lives hang lit up
against the Palace) all because of Arnold Bennett &
Ethel's party. I can hardly set one word after another.
There I was for 2 hours, so it seemed, alone with B.
in Ethel's little back room. And this meeting I am
convinced was engineered by B. to 'get on good terms
with Mrs Woolf' — when heaven knows I dont care a
a snap of the fingers whether I'm on terms with B. or not. B I say: because
he cant say B. He ceases — shuts his eyes — leans
back. One waits. "Begin" he at last articulates
quietly, without any fluster. But the method
lengthens out considerably a rather uninspired discourse.
Its fun. I like the old creature: I do my best, as a
writer, to ~~dect~~ detect signs of genius in his smoky
brown eye: I see certain sensuality, power, I suppose:
but O as he cackled out "what a blundering
fool I am — what a baby — compared with
Desmond MacCarthy — how clumsy — how could I

Soon after this
A.B. went
to France,
drank a
glass of
water,
& died
of
typhoid.
(March 30th)
his funeral
to day)

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I attack professions?" This is no and is engaging; but not. he moves so of felt him, as he infers, a "Creative artist". He said that George Moore in The Mummer's Wife had shown him the Five Towns: taught him what to see there. Has a profound admiration for GM: but despises him for boasting of his sexual triumphs. "He told me that a young girl had come to see him. And he asked her, as she sat on the sofa, to undress. And he said she took off all her clothes & let him look at her— "Now that I don't believe... But he is a prodigious writer— he lives for words. Now he's ill— Now he's an awful bore— He tells the same stories over & over. And soon people will say of me "He's dead". I rather sadly said "Of your books?" "No, of me— he replied, attaching, I suppose, a longer life than I do to his books.

"It's the only life" he said [this meant scribbling, one novel after another, one thousand words daily] I can't don't want anything else. I think of nothing but writing. Some people are bored. "You have all the clothes you want, I suppose" I said. "And baths— And beds. And a yacht." "Oh yes, my clothes couldn't be better cut."

And at last I drew Lord David in. And we taunted the old creature with thinking us refined. He said the gates of Hatfield were shut "shut away from life" "But open on Thursdays" said Lord D. "I don't want to go on Thursdays" said B. "And you drop your aitches on purpose" I said "thinking that you possess more 'life' than we do.

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"I sometimes fear" said B. "But I dont think I possess more life than you do. Now I must go home. I have to write one thousand words tomorrow morning".

And this left only the scrag end of the evening: & this left me in a state where I can hardly drive my pen across the page.

Question: Why does Desmond like talking to Lord Esher?

Reflection: It is presumably a hard thing to look through articles, reviews &c. to find ones own name — yet I often do.

Resolution

To reply to Ethel one day. How can you attach this importance to everything you do when you call yourself a Christian. (inspired by this mornings letter & its emphasis about the dance of the Reason)

Dec. 4th. One word of slight mock in the Lit Sup— today makes me determine, first, to alter the whole of the Waves; second, to put my back up against the ~~fast~~ public — one word of slight mock

Dec. 12th } This, I think, is the last days breathing space I allow myself before I tackle the last lap of the Waves. I have had a week off — that is to say I have written three little sketches; & dawdled; & spent a morning shopping, & a morning, this morning arranging my new table & doing odds & ends — but I think I have got my breath again & must be off for 3 or perhaps 4 weeks more. Then, as I think, I shall

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Paper headlines. | Spanish Revolution. Russian timber just Scandal. Burnt wake man in Cambridge terrace.

make one consecutive writing of the waves &c — the interludes — so as to work it into one — & then — oh dear, some must be written again; & then, corrections; & then send to Mabel; & then correct the type; & then give to Leonard. Leonard perhaps shall get it sometime late in March. Then put away; then print, perhaps in June.

Meanwhile we dine with Mary on Sunday to meet Rupt Hart Davis who may come to the press — but in what capacity? And ~~to~~ two days ago we saw over 25 T. S.: to which we may move, if we decide to leave this, & can let it. But there too are obstacles; an hotel building alongside, & fewer rooms. & more expense.

16th Dec.

I will never dine out again. I will burn my Evening dress. I have gone through this door. Nothing exists beyond. I have taken my fence: & now need never whip myself to dine with Colefax, Ethel, Mary again.

These reflections were hammered in indelibly last night at Argyll House. The same party: same dresses: same food. To listen to Sir Arthur about Q. Vic's letters, & the dyestuffs bill, I forgot — I sacrificed an evening alone with Vita, an evening alone by myself — an evening of pleasure. And so it goes on perpetually. Lord & Lady Esher. Arnold Bennett — old Birrell. Forain. Drey. Hirsch, infantile conversation. And I am not even glared at. So the fence is not only leapt, but fallen. Why jump?

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Paper madness. | Spanish Revolution. Russian timber jail scandal. Burst water main in Cambridge Circus.

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Spiritualist Strikes. Illness of Mr. Poincaré. Suicide of Peter Warlock. Wye Skull Bill.

18th Dec.

Lord David, Lytton & Clive last night. Told them how I had burnt my evening dress in the gas fire – general agreement that parties are a folly – Clive theatrically emphatic. Talk about the riddle of the universe (Jeans' book) whether it will be known: not by us. found out suddenly: about rhythm in prose: Lytton is bringing out a new book of essays; what shall it be called; on living abroad: Clive says we (L & I) are provincial. I say no good abroad, & foreigners in ones hair: Bloomsbury discussed: Lytton against it: Clive in favour: I say no sense of human personality; Lord David's aunt perpetually tears up the life of Ld. Salisbury; feels the same of the lunatics; no cells like dogs: J. V. discussed: Bitter tea; A Lean rages: Clive lyric; Ld. D. skated across the table; my bag came; fog all day;

Spanish Rising. Prince of Wales' Chill. Carnera beats Meen.

"Violet so delighted me", said Ethel, by saying precisely what I wished her to say. It was so touched by the terrible strength & gentleness of V: & by her voice" Now I dont like this: I dont like that Ethel should know that I like compliments: I dont like liking them; I dont like Mrs Woodhouse fabricating them on the telephone

W. H. D. Douglas drowned: 24 English lost: New motor regulation. Lord Willingdon appointed ~~governor~~ viceroy of India

20th Dec.

And Kingsley Martin lunched with us (sweeping up turkey as a char sweeps feathers), & said that the Nation & the N.S. are to amalgamate: & he is to be editor (highly secret, like all nonsense) & would L. be literary editor? – No, L. will not

nè dolcezza di figlio, nè la pieta
del vecchio padre, nè il debito amore
Lo qual dovea Penelope far lieta,
Vincer poter dentro da me l'ardore
Ch'i' ebbe a divenir del mondo esperto,
e degli vizii umani e del valore;

Ma misi me per l'alto mare aperto
Sol con un legno e con quella compagna
picciola, dalla qual non fui deserto

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22nd Dec: Woman's death or Douglas: Indian Conference. Fog. Intermittent. Weather to be colder.

It occurred to me last night while listening to a Beethoven Quartet that I would merge all the interjected passages into Bernard's final speech, & end with the words O Solitude: thus making him absorb all those scenes, & having no further break. This is also to show that the theme effort, effort, dominates: not the waves: & personality: & defiance: but I am not sure of the effect artistically; because the proportions may need the intervention of the waves finally so as to make a conclusion.

23rd. Dec. I will make this hasty note about being robbed. I put my bag under my coat at Marshall & Snelgrove. I turned; & felt, before I looked "this goes" so it was. Then began questions & polite messages – Then the Detective came. He stopped a respectable elderly woman apparently shopping. They exchanged remarks about "the real one – no she's not here today – It's a young woman in brown fur." Meanwhile I was ravaged, of course, with my own futile wishes – how I had thought, & I put down my bag, this is foolish. I was admitted to the underworld. I imagined the brown young woman peeping, pouncing. And never free myself of pounds – my two brooches – all because of that moment. They throw the bags away, said the detective. These dreadful women come here – but not so much as to some of the Oxford St. Shops. Flesh, repel, humiliation, curiously, something frustrated, foolish, something gained, by something frustrated; foolish, something gained – the underworld – a foggy evening – going home, penniless – thinking of my green bag – imagining the woman rifling it – her house – her husband – how to flourish in the Fog.

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Saturday Dec. 27th

Rodmell.

But what's the use of talking about Bernard Shaw's mind? We came down on ~~Wednes~~ Tuesday, & next day my cold was the real influenza. — I am in bed with the usual temperature, & can't use my wits or, as a result, form my letters. I daresay 2 days will see me normal; but then the strange behind my forehead will be dry ~~dus~~ pale — & so my precious fortnight of exaltation & concentration is snatched; & I shall go back to the racket & Nelly without a thing done. I cheer myself by thinking that I may evolve some thoughts. Meanwhile it rains; Annie's child is ill; the dogs next door yap & yap; all the colours are rather dim & the pulse of life dulled. I moon wretchedly through book after book: — Defoe's Tour; Rowan's autoby; Renan's Memoirs; Jeans; in the familiar way.

Diary of a Somerset Rector

The parson Skinner — who shot himself emerges like a bloody sun in a fog. A book worth perhaps looking at again in a clearer mood. He shot himself in the beech woods above his house; spent a life digging up stones & reducing all places to Camelodunum; quarrelled; bickered; yet loved his sons; yet turned them out of doors — a clear hard picture of one type of human life — the exasperated, unhappy, struggling, intolerably afflicted. Oh & I've read Q.V.'s letters & wonder what wd. happen had Ellen Terry been born Queen. Complete disaster to the Empire? Q.V.: entirely unaesthetic; a kind of ~~Mrs~~

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Prussian competence, & belief in herself her only prominences: material: brutal to Gladstone; like a mistress with a dishonest footman. Knew her own mind. but the mind radically commonplace. only its inherited force, & its cumulative sense of power, making it remarkable.

Monday 29th Dec.

One of my final runs to exercise my hands. (Still in bed)

Skinner was called to the Bar, but became, unfortunately, a clergyman. Unfortunately too his wife died, of consumption, leaving him with 3 children. Of these the only satisfactory one was Laura, who inherited her father's love of collecting & tabulating, but also her mother's consumption. So that before she had collected, in a very orderly way, many cabinets of shells, she died; & the other children were unsatisfactory.

Skinner was rector of Camerton in Somerset, & there he remained, year after year, without any aptitude whatsoever for the souls of the living. A clever, upright conscientious man, he did his duty by his flock, by perpetually admonishing them. That they were always bad, seems strange, but was to him true. A colliery was being formed at the village. The morals of colliers are perhaps worse. At any rate, no village in England seems to have contained so many insolent, wicked, ungrateful villagers. And Skinner was forever comparing them with the Romans. His only comfort was to dream himself back into Camelodunum, & to forget 1828. But being a disciplinarian, he was tormented by the need for reforming the living. His conscience refused to let him

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that her Eye upon the sufferings of the halfwitted Mrs Gould,
on the inequities practised upon imbecile paupers at the
workhouse, ~~or~~ & he must perpetually go his rounds
among the sick & dying, for ~~the~~ accidents among
the miners were frequent. He was always on the side
of the afflicted: never on the side of the happy. He
considered himself one of the worst treated of men.
imagined malignancies & rudeness on all sides.
Mrs Jarrett, the Squiress, was an arch-hypocrite.
All her kindness had deceit behind it. When he
was sometimes asked to a ball – to a dinner party
with French dishes. He much preferred solitude
to the most brilliant society. Perpetually censorious,
he found fault with French dishes, with dressing up
with all engagement – save only that of writing,
& writing long accounts of places, catalogues of
antiquity, & in special, his great work upon
Etymology. He met with only ridicule here too.
At a parsons dinner, he was asked to explain, on
his system, the name of Barnstead, which he did – &
then suspected that it was all a joke against him
Suspicion always came after a moments pleasure.
Perhaps the only unalloyed pleasure was found in
his visits to Moorhead, the seat of ,
where a party of antiquaries stayed for a day or
two, giving themselves up to questions of Roman
Britons, of camps & buried cities. There,
sitting alone in the luxurious library, he
enjoyed the exquisite pleasure of copying extracts
from – shall we say? – Ptolemy Theophrastus;

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& the good Bishop of Bath & Wells made him happy too
in spite of a few suspicions — by asking him to
spend the week end at Wells. These however were
his only alleviations. Home life at Camerton
became more & more sordid, humiliating, comfortless &
by degrees violent. Jeered at & insulted by the
rude peasants & farmers, who told him to his face
that he was mad, his treatment was no better in
his own vicarage, & from his own flesh & blood.
~~the sons~~ There were terrible scenes with his sons.
One Joseph told him that he has was making
himself ridiculous by his writings, & was insane.
~~[illegible]~~ Attempts to keep his son from drinking cider
ended — so irritating was his manner — in violent
curses. The sons were always being sent to stay
with their grandmother at Bath. It was his
temper that was at fault, he said; but they were at
fault to irritate his temper. The servants left, because
he wd. not let them walk out after dinner. The
farmers cursed him because he suspected them of
stealing his tythes; he nervously, irritatingly &
incompetently tried to exact his due of lambs &
hay cocks. He knew nothing of farming, nothing of
country life. All he knew was that Camerton
had been Camelodunum, & his obsession on this
point ~~made~~ made even the good natured Baronet
protest that he carried Camelodunum too far.
So at last — all he could do was to write & write —
write. The blank pages of his diary alone
neither sneered, nor laughed in his face, nor
mocked him behind his back, nor plotted his

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blotted the down-hill, one called him mad. Eighty-four volumes of antiquarian lumber ~~were scribbled~~ & ~~of~~ daily complaint & grumbling were scribbled & put away in certain great iron chests which were bequeathed to the British Museum. At last his confidant was the future — in 50 years after his death, he said, these 84 volumes were to be given to the world — which would understand his great contribution to etymology, & take his side against the churchwarden, the Jarrett, Owen, the servant girl & all the rest of this unpalatable perpetually afflicting tribe. Fame & comfort would then be his. No doubt the secret confidence kept him going, through the following miseries of life. For the unhappy man ~~not~~ was not blind to his faults. His chief misery must have come from the struggle of love & irritation. He loved his sons — yet drove them away. They fell ill, & he became all kindness & consideration — & yet how could the unfortunate Owen endure to have his father with him? — his explosive, grating; morose, but devoted father? He gave pain even by his affection. And suddenly the diary, written in a crabbed & ~~illeg~~ illegible hand, ceases to be copied out any longer. The brother whose task it was died. Skinner went on writing, but nobody could read his script. Perhaps the knowledge that even this confidante had failed him finally decided him. At any rate, 7 years later, he went out one December morning in the beech wood, & fired. They found him dead, body & hand at — exactitude, scarred, covered with infernal irritation — on the gloom of the wife & Laura

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Now this little narrative being run off,—& Lord, how difficult to write in bed—I report that the machine is not seriously damaged; & if I can get out, & move about, & yet not get a headache, I daresay in 3 days I shall be beginning to play gently with the Waves. I don't have the temptation here of London. Not normal, but being normal is I daresay rather a fetish. All Mrs Dalloway was written with a temp. of 99 I think. How difficult though to get back into the right mental state: what a queer balance is needed. The little Summer sketch is in the wrong order; but I don't fumble for words. Could let my mind fly. am not as I prove now, used up by an hour's gossip. It rains. Nessa is driving from Seend today. Vita broadcasting. That bedroom voice, singing Bach, talking of the weather, has come in handy.

30th Dec. What it wants is presumably unity; but still I think rather good (I am talking to myself over the fire about The Waves) Suppose I could run all the scenes together more?—by rhythm, chiefly. So as to avoid those cuts: so as to make the blood run like a torrent from end to end—I don't want the waste that the breaks give; I want to avoid chapters: that indeed is my achievement, if any here: a saturated, unchopped, completeness: changes of scene, of mind, of person, done without spilling a drop. Now if it cd. be worked over with heat & currency that's all it wants. And I am getting my blood up. (temp. 99)

But all the same I went into Lewes, & the Keynes's came to tea: & having got outside my indolence the whole world falls into shape: it is this writing that gives me my proportions

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1931

2nd Jan.

This is the turn of the tide. The days are lengthening. Today was fine from start to finish—the first we have had, I think. Nessa came. And for the first time I walked my Northease walk & saw the moon ride at 3, pale, very thin, in a pure blue sky above wide ~~very~~ misty flattened fields, as if it were early on a June morning.

Here are my resolutions for the next 3 months; the next lap of the year.

First, to have none. Not to be tied.

Second, to be free & kindly with myself, not goading it to parties: to sit rather privately reading in the studio. To make a good job of the Waves. To care nothing for making money.

As for Nelly, to stop vexation by the assurance that nothing is worth vexation: if she comes back, she must go. Then not to slip this time into the easiness of letting her stay.

Then—well the chief resolution is the most important—not to make resolutions. Sometimes to read, sometimes not to read. To go out yes—but stay at home in spite of being asked. As for clothes, I think to buy good ones.

This morning Sandles brought Miranda, & she is now stood in her alcove. We went over to Charleston yesterday & I forgot, rather successfully with the usual depression. Is it their levity?—a sneer? But nothing so bad as usual. Duncan there. We came in & the scene had the usual red cave effect—red cave in the widowed winter hollow.

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1931
Jan 7th

Well, we have just got back, had our tea, Francis Birrell has called & been dismissed, & there are two hours to dinner. What am I to do with two hours? I dont want to spend them jumping over my new established & inevitable household—Nelly in the kitchen & Lottie attempting cancelment in the bed room. And I cant settle to read The Enormous Room, nor Madame du Deffand either. L. is busy copying with Mrs Belsher a correspondence. My head is not in the first spring of energy: this fortnight has brought me no news of the lapping down—no fields & hedges—too many scarlet houses & lit up pages & pen & ink—curse my influenza. The very spent here—not a sound but the hiss of the gas. Oh but the cold was too great at Rodmell. I was frozen like a small sparrow. And I did write a few staggering sentences. Few books have interested me more to write than the Waves. Why even now, at the end, I'm turning up a stone or two: no glibness, no assurance; yet see, I could perhaps do B's soliloquy in such a way as to break up, dig deep, make prose move—yes I swear—as prose has never moved before: from the chuckle, the babble to the rhapsody. Something new goes into my pot every morning—something that's never been got at before. The high wind cant blow, because I'm chopping & tacking all the time. And I've stored a few ideas for articles: One on Gosse—the critic as talker; the arm chair critic; one on Letters—one on Queens—

Now this is true: the Waves is written at such high

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pressure that I cant take it up & read it through between tea & dinner: I can only write it for about one hour, from 10 to 11.30. And the typing is almost the hardest part of the work. Heaven help me if all my 80,000 word books are going in future to cost me two years! But I shall fling off, like a cutter leaning on its side, on some further, slighter adventure — another Orlando perhaps.

I looked out at dawn once or twice — a red sun, like a wood fire cinder, in a frosty sky: frost thick on the fields; the candles alight in some of the cottages, & so back to bed, wrapping my clothes round me. And every morning I took the bellows & chafed up my logs, & made a flame jet, & almost always won my blazing fire by the time L. came up.

Now I dislike servants voices & giggles. Enough — enough.

We shall play the Grosse Fugue tonight —

Ethel, I daresay, will ring up. I shall go down & get the post. Tom, Lyn, & Ethel have written: I am asked to contribute to a symposium on Love — & thats about all. But already we are committed to 'see' 6 people before Monday — the only one of importance is John Lehmann. And shall I now write to Arthur Symons about his novel? O dear — what machine is there for making 1 hour & 35 minutes blaze?

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Rather shocked by reading my own essay on Poetry & Fiction. I wish here instead of breaking my back over Dante. (It's true, I get more thrill from Dante, read after an hours labour, than from almost any reading—hence the effort) And Clive is looking in for 5 minutes to say good bye. "And to see how you are" he says. "And how are you?") Say "Blind" he says, rather dolefully. Such is the state of our relationships at 10 to 6 on Saturday Jan. 10th 1931. Lord lord, what a queer thing life is!

We walked through the little dingy streets of Seven dials Leonard & I this afternoon, to Charing Cross Road. What a mood of tears I was in—of pathos, for Leonard, for myself: & said to him Would you like half a crown to buy a squirrel? Suddenly one is overcome with sorrow for people.

But to be connected—Lehmann may do: a tight cerulean boy, pink, with the adorable curls of youth: yes, but persistent, sharp. Shall I be had at home as apprentice? Can I have the Hogarth Press books? Not much atmosphere; I see perhaps that his eyes are unappealing: Lord knows. And we ask 4 or 5 Thousand for his share.

Now these figures have driven away my stir & the spirit of delight, whose wings were brushing me. In spite of our solid middleclass household (servants again) & overcooked meat.

I think a little Dante is indicated—Canto XXVI

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Tuesday
Jan 20th

(This is Here & Now I think. May. 34.)

I have this moment, while having my bath, conceived an entire new book—a sequel to a Room of Ones Own—about the sexual life of women: to be called Professions for Women perhaps—Lord how exciting! This sprang out of my paper to be read on Wednesday to Pippa's society. Now for the Waves. Thank God—but I'm very much excited.

Friday
Jan 23rd

Too much excited, alas, to get on with the Waves. One goes on making up The Open Door, or whatever it is to be called. The didactive demonstrative style conflicts with the dramatic: I find it hard to get back inside Bernard again.
The speech took place: & I think by myself ~~general~~ exacerbated: an interesting observation of some one—Two hundred people: well dressed, keen, & often beautiful young women. Ethel in her blue Kimono & wig. I by her side. Her speech rollicking & direct: mine too compressed & allusive. Never mind. ~~all~~ so Four people want the speeches printed. Naturally I am rather used up—cant make the effort this morning of going on with the Waves. And am 49: & get headaches very easily—Lord, how often this drains my last chapters of their strength! And now Open Door is sucking at my brain too. Such accidents cant be avoided.

Vita last night: "If I, who am the most fortunate of women, can ask What is life for?, how can other people live at all?" In a vague mood of depression—She says she gets more pain than pleasure from praise of her books, which I believe to be true. Never was there a more modest writer. And yet she makes £74 in a morning—I mean a cheque drops in for a story.

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Monday 26th Jan.

Heaven be praised, I can truthfully say on this first day of being 49 that I have shaken off the obsession of Opening the door, & have returned to Waves: & have this instant seen the entire book whole, & how I can finish it — say in under 3 weeks. That takes me to Feb. 16th; then I propose, after doing Jane, or an article perhaps, to dash off the rough sketch of Open Door, to be finished by April 1st (Easter is April 3rd). We shall then, I hope, have an Italian journey: return say May 1st & finish Waves, so that the MS. can go to be printed in June, & appear in September. These are possible dates anyhow. Yesterday at Rodmell we saw a magpie & heard the first spring birds: sharp egotistical, like man. A hot sun: walked over Caburn; home by Mosley — saw 3 men dash from a blue car & race, without hats across a field. We saw a silver & blue aeroplane in the middle of the field, apparently unhurt, among trees & cows. This morning the paper says three men were killed — the aeroplane dashing to the earth: & ~~the~~ But we went on, reminding me of that epitaph in the Greek Anthology: when I sank, the other ships sailed on.

My memory of todays headlines is this: Ghandi set free. Pavlova to be buried at Golders Green. Rapper murder on Blackheath. Death of Lady St Helier — who was so ~~—~~ I condescending to me, 30 years ago.

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Mon. Feb. 2nd.

I think I am about to finish The Waves. I think I might finish it on Saturday.

This is merely an author's note: never have I screwed my brain so tight over a book. The proof is that I am almost incapable of other reading or writing. I can only flop wide once the morning is over. Oh Lord the relief when this week is over. — & have anyhow the feeling that I have wound up & done with that long labour: ended that vision. I think I have just done what I meant: of course I have altered the scheme considerably; but my feeling is that I have insisted upon saying, by hook or by crook certain things I meant to say. I imagine that the hooked-ness may be so great that it will be a failure from a reader's point of view. Well, never mind: it is a brave attempt. I think, something struggled for. Oh & then the delight of skirmishing free again — the delight of being idle, & not much minding what happens: & then I shall be able to read again, with all my mind — a thing I haven't done these 4 months I daresay. This will have taken me 18 months to write: & we cant publish it till the autumn I suppose.

William P. talked more of his new novel, the autobiography or experiences? of an Emigrant the other night than L. has talked of his books all his life.

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Wed.
Feb. 4th

A day ruined, for in both — L. has to go every morning at 10.15 to the Courts, where his Jury is still called, but rebuffed always till 10.15 the next day: & this morning wh. should have dealt a formidable blow at the Waves — B. is within 2 days I think of saying O Death — was ruined by Elly, who was to have come at 9.30 sharp but did not come till 11. And it is now 12.30, & we sat talking about the period & professional women, after the usual rites with the stethoscope, seeking vainly the cause of my temperature. If we like to spend 7 guineas we might catch a bug — but we dont like. And so I am to eat Bemax & — the usual routine.
How strange & wilful these last exaltations of the Waves are! I was to have finished it at Christmas.
Today Ethel comes. On Monday I went to hear her rehearse at Lady Lewis's. A vast Portland Place house with the cold wedding cake Adams plaster: ~~and~~ shabby red carpets; flat surfaces washed with dull green. The rehearsal was in a long room with a bow window looking on, in fact in, to other houses — ~~b~~ bare staircases, chimneys, roofs — a barren brick outlook. There was a roaring fire in the Adams grate. Lady L. a nice shapeless sausage, & Mrs Hunter, a swathed satin sausage, sat side by side on a sofa. Ethel stood at the piano in the window, in her battered felt, in her jersey & short skirt conducting with a pencil. There was a drop at the end of her nose. Miss Suddaby was singing the Soul,

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& I observed that she went through precisely the same attitudes of ~~exst~~ ecstasy & inspiration in the room, as in a hall: there were five young or youngish men. Ethel's pince nez rode nearer & nearer the tip of her nose. She sang now & then; & once, taking the bass, made a cat squealing sound — but everything she does with such forthrightness directness that there is nothing ridiculous — She loses self-consciousness completely. She seems all vitalised; all of enlarged: She knocks her hat from side to side. Strides rhythmically down the room to signify to Elizabeth that this is the Greek melody; strides back: Now the ~~funeral~~ furniture moving began, the dead, referring to some supernatural gambols connected with the prisoner's escape, or defiance or death. I suspect the music is too literary — too stressed — too didactic for my taste. But I am always impressed by the fact that it is music — I mean that she has spun these coherent chords harmonies melodies out of her so practical vigorous, strident mind. What if she should be a great composer? This fantastic idea is to her the merest commonplace: it is the fabric of her being. As she conducts, she hears music like Beethoven. As she strides & turns & whirls about to us perched mute on chairs she thinks this is about the most important event now taking place in London. And perhaps it is. Well — I watched the curiously sensitive, perceptive Jewish face of old Lucy L — trembling like a butterflies antennae to the sound. How sensitive to music old women are — how pliable, how nibble. Mrs Hunter sat like a wax figure composed, unpolitical, her transfixed, with her gold chain purse.

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Saturday
Feb. 7th

Here in the few minutes that remain, I must record, heaven be praised, the end of the Waves. I wrote the words O Death fifteen minutes ago, having reeled across the last ten pages with some moments of such intensity & intoxication that I seemed only to stumble after my own voice, or almost, after some sort of speaker (as when I was mad) I was almost afraid, remembering the ~~of~~ voices that used to fly ahead. Anyhow it is done; & I have been sitting these 15 minutes in a state of glory, & calm, & some tears, thinking of Thoby & if I could write Julian Thoby Stephen 1881–1906 on the first page. I suppose not. How physical the sense of triumph & relief is! Whether good or bad, its done; &, as I certainly felt at the end, not merely finished, but rounded off, completed, the thing stated—how hastily, how fragmentarily I know; but I mean that I have netted that fin in the waste of water which appeared to me over the marshes out of my window at Rodmell when I was coming to an ~~end~~ end of To the Lighthouse.

What interests me in the last stage was the freedom & boldness with which my imagination picked up used & tossed aside all the images, symbols which I had prepared. I am sure that this is the right way of using them—not in set pieces, as I had tried at first, coherently, but simply as images; never making them work out; only suggest. Thus I hope to have kept the sound of the sea & the birds, dawn, & garden subconsciously present, doing their work under ground.

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Fri. 14th Feb.

And I had my hair curled two days ago. With what difficulty I controlled my bottomless despair when Nessa disapproved—I will front the world curled, I said to myself at 6 o'clock a.m: very valiantly; I like my experimental temper.

Janet Case yesterday. Shrivelled, narrowed, dimmed, aged, & very poverty struck. I noted her cheap shoes & dirty old velvet hat. I suppose over 70 now: & yet I always think of her as 45. She clings to youth. "But we never see any young people." & so reads Tom Eliot &c: has her wits about her—but oh dear the pathos when our teachers become our learners. She has had I suppose a far harder life than I know—illness. poverty. & all the narrowness of living; & she alone with Emphie; without any luxury, & the thought—I dont know about this—of leaving E. or being left. She was staying with an old man of 91. A curious clutching custom some such old age grows on: then her face has become pointed, whitened; shrunk: her eyes remain. How I used to wait for her lesson: & then the arguments. She Settlements. I was 17 she said when she came. She felt unsuccessful.

17th Feb.

And I feel so, compared with Aldous & Maria, unsuccessful. They're off today to do mines, factories, black country; did the docks when they were here: must see England. They are going to the Sex Congress at Moscow, have been in India, will go to America. Think friends, visit celebrities,—while here I live like a weevil in a biscuit. The fogs thicken. My electric lamp is broken; (because we are having forces put) Lord, how

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little I've seen, done, lived, felt, thought compared with the Huxleys — Compared with anyone. Here we toil, reading, writing, year in year out. No adventures, no travel; darker grows the fog. How lonesome, invisible rope, we are bound. Add to this my Great perception of fdamentary relation. With Nina for example. I think she plumes [illegible] prides herself: I think she gets self sufficient: I think her beauty is praised: I think she does not want me; I think a million things a minute. My boasts do me harm. My reality is unknown. So I go on — this is the peak of the waves. My ship has sailed a. I tow among supply bottle a bits of toilet paper. & the servants: Lottie. Mrs M. Nelly comfortably installed for life.

And I am to write 6 articles straight off: about what? And a story. About what? All I like is my own capacity for feeling. W I weren't so miserable I could not be happy. And the Huxleys are now approaching Chesterfield, where they will interview managers. Aldous takes life in hand. Whether that damages his writing I don't know. He is 'modern'. He is suddenly athletic & adventurous. He will be able to say he did not waste his youth. Some bitterness is the goad to which drives him on. Death comes: nothing matters: at least let me see all that there is to be seen, read all there is to be read. I fancy no one thing gives him the immense satisfaction things give me. That's all the comfort I find.

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9th March

And then I went, more than a week ago to Lady Rosebery's — blank scarlet room, buffet, Elderly butlers & peers. Lady R. young & thorny. Lord Revelstoke gentlemanly. Caviare. Lady Oxford. A curious fierce, dart in her eye: strung: pinioned. I knew your father — your mother ... &c. Is to come to tea. Wants me to write about her book. Sense of drama & blare: of Ethel's unmoveable fancy: her irrepressible vanity, & some pang too for her childish craving for a party — how tawdry how paltry: her facing out the failure of the Reason: her desperate good cheer: her one bouquet: her old battered wigged head. How injured my feelings were — & how exhausted & windswept & disillusioned I was — with my ears ringing, & no warmth depth comfort stuffing & ease anywhere: but all effort & strain: & the sense of the futility of it all.

16th March.

These few & rather garbled entries, these, I think, the back wash of the Waves. I am writing little articles of a morning, & should have been sketching the Homes of the Great this morning, but that I have not the material. This afternoon I shall try to see Carlyle's house & Keats' house. Tomorrow I lunch with George & Margaret to meet the Rothensteins. Miss Holtby is writing a book on me. So we go on, until, with the sun out & the birds singing as I hope, we end this lap of the year with 3 weeks holiday. I'm ready this year for holiday. I think indeed that I have seldom worked harder, one way & another — Emotionally there has been the

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Night perpetual restraint with Nelly: & one fine blaze, about Lady Rosebery's party with Ethel — that valiant truculent old moss-trooper of a woman. She is so gritty to be broken with. And I respect her capacity for ignoring me. She took to reading Dean Inge. She rage, when she assumed from my voice — exhausted, cold & gruff — that 'all was over'. The strength of feeling is her power over one. This drives her headlong. The Press has been cat calling — whistling. Never mind. She has other schemes on foot already. A curious problem — what she minds, what she thinks, about her music. She descends to ~~the~~ explanations in Time & Tide which seem deplorably low down. No, I cannot write this morning. Barbara, Julian & Betty Jenkins the other night — Julian — a stew about his poems. And so my quiet week end at Rodmell next week will be spent discussing Pope &c. Now I grudge it — & yet cant deny the young. Ann Toby Henderson & I go to Tantivy Towers. But enough of this moping & groping.

There is no doubt that a low mood, betokening despondency is more enlivening to our friends than one blown with triumph & success. —

"I should say I value more the privilege of seeing great things in loneliness than the fame of a Prophet"

Keats. Letter 212.

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Monday
19th March

Ethel yesterday, very uneasy about her character: & possible misrepresentations. I think deluding herself about her own motives in countering reviewers: (purely for the sake of other musicians, women in particular: I've nothing to lose—have suffered neglect all my life) I think uneasy about her own greatness, requiring assurance, & snatching at rather thankfully thankfully from such vague remarks as I could make "That's just what I wanted you to say": — she plays a losing game very gallantly. "But I detest Bohemianism—I want fresh air. above everything. Therefore I took care to attach myself. I was the friend of the Empress. The Ambassador was an old friend of mine. I couldn't afford to be declassée. Couldn't have borne it.
[about her standing in London society]

It seems possible to me that nature gave her everything except the power of expression in music:—hence the rage & violence & restlessness of her nature: the one outlet is stopped up. And she for ever batters at the door: it remains locked: she flows away over me, Lady Cunard—whoever it may be with the vehemence of a tortured & baffled spirit. But she would die rather than allow this. Hence her terrific egotism: her insatiable desire for praise, since she is denied the only true satisfaction: her exhausting companionship. Therefore.

Christabel last night.
I put Lunan higher than anybody's love—above you, who are above the rest.
My fourth child is not by my husband.
Why these candours & confessions?
She did not like me, or trust me. last night.
Dermod, ~~[illegible]~~ Benita?; Vanessa, Raymond, Vita.
Lord David Duncan Julian

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And here I sit, waiting to go to the Richmonds, having lunched with Clive, about to dine with the Wolves. Wine at lunch flushes me & floats me. So with Tom. A bad thing. My hair came down. Yesterday at the Docks with Harold. ~~and~~ Tomorrow, Ethel's party at Vera's. Friday Tanbury Tower — ah—reminds me to write more letters before I change. Lord Lord.

Saturday 28th March

Arnold Bennett died last night: which leaves me sadder than I should have supposed. A lovable genuine man; impeded, somehow ~~a~~ a little awkward in life: well meaning; ponderous; kindly; coarse; knowing he was coarse: dimly floundering & feeling for something else. Glutted with success. wounded in his feelings: avid; thicklipped: prosaic intolerably; rather dignified: set upon writing: yet always taken in: deluded by splendour & success: but naive: an old bore: an egotist; ~~well~~ much at the mercy of life for all his competence: a shop keeper's view of literature: yet with the rudiments, covered over with fat & prosperity & the desire for hideous Empire furniture; of sensibility. Some real ~~absorbing~~ & understanding power, as well as a gigantic absorbing power. — these are the sort of things that I think by fits & starts this morning, as I sit journalising; I remember his determination to write 1000 words daily. & how he trotted off to do it that night: & feel some sorrow that now he will never sit down & begin methodically covering his regulation

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number of page in his workmanlike beautiful but dull hand. Queer how one regrets the dispersal of any body who seemed—as I say—genuine: who had direct contact with life—for he abused me; & I yet rather wished him to go on abusing me; & me abusing him. An Element in life—even one that was so remote—taken away. This is what one minds.

April 11th

Oh I am so tired of correcting my own writing—these 8 articles—I have however learnt I think to dash: not to finick. I mean the writing is free enough: its the repulsiveness of correcting that nauseates me. And the cramming in, & the cutting out. And articles & more articles are asked for. For ever I could write articles.

But I have no pen—well, it will just make a mark. And not much to say, or rather too much & not the mood.

We came back on Thursday. The sun always rose all the hours pushed: the grass in the Dyke was literally liquid emerald. And so in Imagine my regrets for Monks House: & here I start in the night—my early morning are terrible battles—Fight. fight—yet later I cant remember what the fights about—I remember saying Curse, oh God, curse: as I remember that hideous new house on the top of my Down: the rampart so often looked at on my evening walk. They are building the garage now: so we dig ourselves in.

And I saw Pernel & of course, on top of Pernel

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Peter:- as she was cross & he was pertinacious. - I had to
skim the two of them with talk about Mrs. Hunt[?]
life of ~~P~~ Elen - Siddal: which what I wanted today. But
these lovers have the pertinacity of gnats gnats round
flames: must talk, even if not about Sheilah.
On Thursday we have our fortnight in France.
I intend to keep a diary so as to make each
day last longer. Think I shall like La Rochelle
best: I shall want to live there. I shall take a
house there:- I shall dream of walking there when I am
old & feeble as sleep.

Here I will paste in — though it's hardly worth the
trouble the fitful flying notes I made. Generally
very cold, rather wet, with a rug round my knees,
for the weather — everybody is talking about the
weather - the worst april for 50 years.
That we retrieved so much from it that was
lovely, vanishing, amusing & had so many good
hours. Spinning along the wet road, under
a complete grey cloud, speaks well for the
state of our souls. After being married since August
1912! ~~1912~~ 1931
1912
19 nineteen years, here
~~we~~ morning to find this warmth, curiosity
attachment in being alone with L. If I
dared I would investigate my own sensations
with regard to him, but out of laziness,
humility, pride, I dont know what reticence —
refrain. I who am not reticent.

Diary of Tour
to La Rochelle,
Brantome
&c.

April 16th 1931

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Tuesday April 16th

Newhaven: dinner. Hotel lately done up in modern style. Guests surprising. 2 young men in trousers are women. One is Mrs Pilkington. Conversation on phone. "Oh darling Judy.. longing to see you – Ethel too marvellous. In bed at 2.30 this morning. Now at Newhaven" Yet she strode & gestured male: check shirt. The other had feminine face: was the woman of the two: but trousers. Nobody stared. Ordered cocktails. Other guests, man like Tartarin: bulging black beard sprouting from chin: bare ankles: yachting cap: but English. Other a newly married pair: bride in pink evening dress. Rang up. Maybe the family – heir presumably. Elderly married couples crossing, like ourselves, looked too respectable in this comedy film star atmosphere – at Newhaven of all places. And a fairly good dinner.

April 17th

Very wet: very cold: horrid seaside marine atmosphere: all drenched & shrubs blown as usual at Dieppe. Breakfast in the [illegible] hotel. Started. Wind & rain: almost black air. Rain came through. At the

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ferry at Quillebeuf & saw blue sky - great rejoicing
Lunch at inn by ferry - cheap, coarse; but good.
Old man & woman country people lunching. He
had a thimble of brandy in his coffee. On
again. Cold but fine in boats. Along country
road. No horse. Came to Alençon. A
white elegant old town, with a great majestic
free all stuck thick with flowers. Heard a
loud speaker in an old & house, where a girl
sat under rows of jars writing. Odd little scene.
Vast bare place for soldiers. Dined badly -
save for wine; a whole bottle. Guests:
4 French business men & one Chinese.
business man: a girl like Hedegund &
very old man. Talk about train to Paris:
Cold water in our bath; for which we paid
heavily. Bitter cold: but suffocated with hot
air early in the morning. Started for
Saumur. Drove more slowly. Awful weather.
bitter cold - Nothing clothes on - Lunch at
Sablé-sur-Sarthe: not good food yet.
Little old town on river. Saw old Castle at
Durtal: turned into almshouse & hotel: lovely
with extinguisher peaked towers.

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Saturday 18th

4.

Saumur, cold & wet, with steamer. Night.
The Loire - vast, without a single boat.
France very empty. Hotel improved.
hotter water. Women said they had been
wearing cotton dresses - weather unknown.
Saw the big round church by the river
A market. Started, having forgotten
change of time. Bad morning. Went to
Fontevrault. Saw beautiful bare old
convent church. Don't take off your hat, said
man - it's not sacred. The tombs of
Plantagenets - where Edith sketched. Straight,
narrow side by side: re-painted, blue -
red. Now all the great convent where
filles de France educated a prison. Prison
bells ringing for their dinner. Fountain
where the girls washed before dinner. The
cold must have been worse then.
The abbesses had themselves painted in
person - fat, sensual, high nosed faces.
Went on in rain across country. Narrow
yellow road - old women sitting in
fields under umbrellas near sheep
Biblical. Behind time - Lunch
at Thouars: the food still no better

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Monday
April
20th

than lord in English June. L. says. Gradual
Southerly feeling - men playing boules. Old
men getting out of cars to pick flowers in
the woods. Roads as straight as
rods: some of them entirely lined with
trees: their tops touching. But the
worst weather so far. Car shut all day.
Reached Niort at 6: determined to
push on 40 miles to La Rochelle.
Arrived at 7.30 - & pick one
Driver: I forgot our 2 punctures. One
at Mouchamps; kept us, as the man did
not mend it while we lunched. I read
Sons & Lovers, every word: a messy
so sound. Wished for fur coat. Another
puncture 10 miles later. Had to stand in
rain & change wheel. Scratched a hole in
the road. On it all again. Went into
Hotel on the place. Found them dancing:
so came here (de France et Angleterre)
Gaudy night - very ciré floors: quiet:
a garden - room: lilac: flowers but roofs:
but still grey this morning. Window open
though: & not actually raining

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Monday 21st.

to Marennes: Cold & dark at first: gradually cleared. Our first day. People at once begin waving: but shutters up. Went to Marennes, across an emerald green marsh: deserted: a cow or two: a tall strange woman dressed in black like a clergyman. At Bourgeant! — a town in an old wall: tufted with grass. Lovely country a ferry. aeroplanes looping loops: Church in Marennes: old ships hung from ceiling. The hotel of the oysters 2 Km. on. Sat at green tables in the sun & drank coffee: L. had 12 oysters alive: twisted when mouth he said: green: with distorted shells. A pine wood; all silent: no bungalows. low sea. boats cut at oyster banks. Very lovely drive back across the marsh. Tall marsh grasses fine yellow like babies hair: broad brown river: friendly men — ferry. Home. Now colder. Car jammed. First fly wholly fine day. Lunch off pate & croissants in the marsh. Lan Hotel food soon bores.

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Saturday
25th April.

Angoulême. Fair, agst concours agricole braying. - a loudspeaker too under a vast blue & yellow cardboard tower, higher than this hotel, a wh - & written Huiles et Tourteaux: they sell ices also like opening. We have been to the concours: seen dogs: Belgian hares: mechanical saws: been in towers. Then walked, in high wind & black cloud, round battlements. Slightly reminded me of Clifton - high airy terrace, overlooking breadths of cloud darkened country. Girls drinking port & eating cakes in Thé Salon.
Before this, we went to Castillon: - an adventure. Terrible route driving on narrow country roads. Longer route than Brantôme. Arrived late. Asked for dinner at Boule D'Or. Walked by the Dordogne - of majestic breadth, empty like all France, save for one racing boat.
We slept here very well in soft warm beds, though there was no hot water & the cold was so great we had to go to bed.
Next day was fine & warm. I went into the Church: as the school children had left.

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always wonder at the immense fund of
ancient holy. dragging these blocks into more
villages. Lovely spring day. Drove 70 or 80
miles to Montaigne. Rang at castle
door. No one came - Women tending
cows in ancient stables. A tower at
one end. A garden with flowering trees
The usual renovated peaked & black
tiled Chateau: over the door Que sais-je —
A woman came. took us up narrow
stone steps. worn; opened thick nail studded
door. This is his bedroom. This is its
dressing room. Here he died. Here he
went down - he was very small - to
Chapel. Upstairs again is his library.
The books & furniture are at Bordeaux.
Here is his chair & table. He wrote
those inscriptions on the beams. There
through near his room: a piece of
an old wooden chair might be his.
A circular tower, very thick; 3
small windows looking along
the wall to another tower. All that
remains of the [illegible] - but the old

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Chateau in 1880 – or thereabouts. We wandered on the terrace – saw the vineyards below: the shaped reddish hills & terraces: one or two brooding brown farms – much his view – the curious musing man must have halted to look at what we saw. So lovely now; as then. American ~ Every day of the year the woman said. A dog went with a fetching a chestnut & putting it on the parapet to be thrown. So on, through lovely shaped fields, like the south, but subtler, to Bergerac, where we had our best – our only good meal 2 says. Indeed when the novelty is gone, the food is ranker – commoner & less interesting than I remembered: save for this lunch: old Monbazillac wine; pâté; sea eggs & so on. To Perigueux: old furniture shops: expensive chairs: a church with green domes; scraped; renewed all worshippers are old women: all in black: all woollen: decrepit. a

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random point ambling along with different
features - Tom's Essays (I must read his
Lambeth tonight, having read myself
almost out of books). So to
Brantome — in the evening sun.
Man felling poplar in a flat meadow:
boy fishing; a ring & loop of water under
old bridge: smoky cave dwellings
lived in since Charlemagne.
Cheap. clean. Elementary Inn — no
letters. Kauffer. Ethel - Vita — about
my bibliography: papers: Nessa at
Okehampton in floods: determined that
England is intolerable — children so
excited she cant give up the tour.
Walk yesterday. Forgot the size of maps
found Champagnac beyond us.
Went wrong at Les Roches. Arrived
at an old house on a green sward, with
trees & walled garden - O to live here,
we said. So much subtler. gentler,
lovelier than Cassis. The land
is flat & green as a lawn; with

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Elongated quivering poplar just sledged: then the spade greened hills I love: & the river, by which we walked — the river so deep. So romantic, taking the blue thunder clouds. the willows twisting them nonchalantly, flowing on. Clumps of purple gentian in the reeds. An Elizabethan meadow — cowslips, bluebells: But the thunder roared out. We ran — we sheltered under a rained cave of some root. Then dashed home 2 miles of road or more: thighs aching: thunder & lightning at Cemetery. all the tin shelters & metal wreaths gleamed. Girls, mourners, took arms & ran. Home before the main shower, very heavy.
Fair. All the women in black with kids & sheep - pens of pigs. Man said his sister in law said fish cheaper in Paris. Clerks from the Société Générale for dinner lunch. One black literary man - the other very southern: mobile talked about cars.

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26th
Sunday.

On to Poitiers. Went to Moreen last night after a good dinner at the hotel we sho. have stayed at. Laughed violently at animals in hotel. A light sensible method of the French – of telling the story of a cycle raa- done by quick drawings on a sheet. Out into cold town – all spread for rain, which does not come. Cold windy drive this morning – Country is like Hampshire, dare for Englishmen. No cars. Poitiers for lunch. A Restaurant. Officers lunching & their young ladies – rather provincial. Enormous meal made by a short stout of a man – handful was Soufflé disappear. Visited churches, heard women baa-ing responses like sheep. Rain & cold by 3ish; so came back to read & write till dinner. A good homely hotel: room looking onto courtyard. but still cold.

No central heating that night: so had to go to bed for warmth, as before.

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27th Monday

Cloud of Sunday lifted: but heavy on the skies. Drove over high ground to ~~Angoulême~~; ~~rain~~ ~~sweeping rain~~ Chinon: showery: a decent charming grey: white town. Got our letters. Pleasant to be asked to write about making a speech: & know one cant answer. A fortuitous lunch – one great success. No comparison with White Hart at Lewes possible. Climbed the steep path to Castle. Tapped at door. Went away pleased. Old woman summoned us back. Explored Castle alone as usual. Not a single tourist, & only 3 sights the whole tour. Saw the high unroofed room in wh. Jeanne stood before the King. The very charming kiosk perhaps. Walls cut through by their windows. Suddenly one looks down, down on roofs. How did the middle ages get through the evenings? A stone crypt in wh. J. lived: people carve their names everywhere. River silken serpentine beneath. Liked the stone roofless rooms; & the angular steps to cut windows. ~~He~~ Sat on the steps to hear 2 struck by the clock wh. has rung since the 13th Century: wh. J.

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heard Rusty tones. What did she think? - was she mad? a visionary coinciding with the right moment. Drove on; showers; cold; bad roads; monuments - cheerful enough, till we landed at Chateau le-noir hoping for a small washing inn - Women holding the ends of sheets in the hall. Perpetual washing & ironing at hotels - small child in Bureau playing with paper - good dinner of its kind - then the Movies began in the courtyard - talk & laughing till 12-30 or 20. This damp place did its best to [illegible], unfortunately for us. And bad breakfast in the public room, smelling of wine. So off: the day cold, but rather brighter - They call this La Lune Rousse. They say it happens every year. Whether red or Russian I dont know. So to Le Mans. Another grey & white curved, dignified, flat windowed ancient town. Sitters. The Cathedral. Bought umbrellas: ~~paper~~ bags tray; lunched. The tournedos underdone & expensive -

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very little good meat in town restaurants I should say: eat Cheese Omelette, what ever it was — duck I think — excellent. There's not much to put against the White Hart Lewes — on simple comparison: In this great argument I am always for France & for England. Expense seems higher than 3 years ago. I voted for Dreux; so we went there — to Hotel de Paradis; & coming in heard the violins, & saw thickly dressed girls: cheap: rigged out in ready made from the local shops. A wedding. Dancing already at 5.30. This is the Inn that has old cupboards. Had to dine across the yard, as the dining room was danced in: Strawberries for dinner. An ice; but remembering A. Bennett, refused it. All very slow & cold. People driving up in cars all the time. Little boys scampering about in black velvet — small girls perfectly dressed & very prim. Whole families invited: small bourgeois people I imagine. The dancing went on till 11. Then

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we saw the wretched waiter carrying tables
across - how typical all waiters mouths -
chambermaids - how terribly aware of the
transitoriness of life - & the mere slipper
they are. Then at 12 or 1 (I was woken)
cars began turning up: people shouting, laughing
saying goodbye. I had seen the bride dancing -
a pale girl in spectacles - & thought of her
borne off to fulfil her duties in some small
suburban house outside Dreux, for she
was marrying a clerk I should think. &
they now begin to replenish the race.
This morning was very fine. I put on my
shady hat & left off my jersey. So did L.
And I was cajoled into considering seriously a
desk; £10: then shopped in Nonancourt:
found a splendid old furniture shop -
cultivated man in knee breeches with cut-
shooting - a connoisseur - too aware -
perhaps shall buy a bed. Then lunched
at our Clara's Bois Joli - my word!
a Chateau furnished each room in its own
period: a chicken turned over the fire on a
spit: old curtains: pretty maids in pretty

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dress: the mine fake: amusing: American: the
said of the cowslips "Look at these baby primroses —
aren't they cute?" How I hate foreigners bad
French. The lunch admirable: but cost £1.10.
This is Clara's idea of heaven. Not mine.
A glorified Drusilla's tea shop. Sickened me
of old French furniture. Lovely as they are,
they lose infinitely from being preserved set and
the charm, & the effort to ~~be~~ tickle our vanity &
feed on our money disagreeable. Lots of
ancient summer houses - Skittles - an
old caleche the most pleasant thing - rotted
off with some rubbish in a doorway - 18th
Century. So home: Caudebec: & the
weather is now (on Easterday) set fine. So
be it.

1931

Sunday
May
3rd

52 Tavistock Square.

Yes. that's all very well: but how to begin, & why begin? I
mean what do these diaries amount to? Merely
matter for a book, I think: & to read when I have a headache.
After all, Percy could burn the lot in one bonfire.
He could burn them at the edge of the field where, so
we think, we shall lie buried. That was our conclusion
after attending Arnold Bennett's funeral.
But now, say I have a 3 months lap ahead of me:
the 3 summer months. What shall I do? We
are going to regulate 'seeing' people. There is to be a
weekly black hole: a seething mass of people all
eating tea together. We shall thus have more
evenings free. In those evenings I intend
to walk; to read, Elizabethans: to be mistress of my
soul. Yes. And I intend to investigate
Edinburgh & Stratford on Avon. Also to
finish off The Waves in a dashing masterly
manner. Wdt Laurence has given me much
to think about — about writing for writings
sake. Two days are to be set aside for
reading MSS: & they are not to leak into
other compartments. These two decisions —
the Black Hole & Hogarth Press MSS. will
I think make for an orderly & satisfactory
summer. Then of course, being now so well
off, with 2 frigidaires & everything handsome,
I need not fritter & fribble about clothes: &
having little sense of the duty of society left,
shall hope to take my way about unhasting
unresting. I want to see the fields, flowers,
one or two new places: to write some good
which. at the moment, I seem able to write
criticism fearlessly. Because of a R. of one? I
said suddenly to myself last night.

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May 13th

Unless I write a few sentences here from time to time I shall, as they say, forget the use of my pen. I am now engaged in typing out from start to finish the 332 pages of that very condensed book The Waves. I do 7 or 8 daily; by which means I hope to have the whole complete by June 16th or thereabouts. This requires some resolution; but I can see no other way to make all the corrections, ~~but~~ & keep the lilt, & join up, & expand, & do all the other final processes. It is like sweeping over an entire canvas with a wet brush.

But it is a happy life. Those rules I made have so far kept my week orderly. Yesterday I went to Mrs Hunter's sale, & before I had been in the room 5 minutes had bought through Mr Marchment of Shepherds Bush a large old rosewood & satinwood secretaire for £6.16. Heavens! The wood alone was worth that. It was a sordid, emulative, eating, depressing scene. The trade was there in force. Jews. smoking pipes. Many winks & nods interchanged. Poor old Mrs Hunter's litter odds & ends were peered at & snatched; everybody seemed to be finding out flaws. & offering the least money. Marchment kept saying to me "Buy it—buy it—it'll grow into money". Thus solicited. I did buy a shawl for 35/- & a little cabinet for £3.15. This I regretted; & I let slip — oh never mind. One must take these bargains & slips philosophically, in order to attain the

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perfectly buoyant & energised life which is now my aim. O yes. I dont waste a moment: I am always on the hop, with so much licence too allowed for sheer frivolity. Most plans of life are far too strict. I allow a liberal margin for pleasure.

The faces of Mrs H's rich friends disgusted me. Nothing is quite so coarse, cruel, meaningless, & sensual as a fashionable woman's face, who is about 50: has done nothing but scavenge about London in cars: eating & drinking: marrying: coveting, tittle tattling. The Smyth-Hunter circle centres I think round the throne: the golfing courses: the purlieus of ~~A~~ the Bath Club & Whites. They are horsey & dressy; but not aristocratic, not distinguished. They are very well off; but love money largely — Or so at least I diagnose them. But then philosophy requires them to take tumbles bravely. When we went in on Friday to look at the things, Mrs H. was sitting at the desk which I want to buy, as cool & self-possessed as if she were giving a house warming, instead of seeing all her possessions, beds & blankets, paper knives & hen traps, all go for two or three shillings. "I see you so seldom. Do sit down for a moment & talk:" And what was I today, to a woman old enough to be my mother, in that predicament?

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May 19th

A quarter of an hour: — yes, & what to say in a quarter of an hour.

Lytton's book: very good. That's his line. The compressed yet glowing account which requires logic, reason, learning, taste, wit, order & infinite skill — this suits him far better, I think than the larger scale, needing boldness, despicability, mass. I'm delighted too, to have an argument in proof of writing v. non-writing. Compare with Lawrence. There things went tarnish & drop & let fall than hold. They kept at force: at reserve: at the strength to leave things unsaid: the strength required not to preach — not to extemporise. Like Max. Though — small talent sedulously cultivated. And I respect that. But I don't respect Logan. I loathe the vulgarity, the fibbery & frivolity of Logan (after the Pearsall Smith's).

Lytton & Raymond to dinner tonight.

Desmond t'other night. He needs £300. Can't handle his book — matter of clearer for leaving it with us. Much obliterated in the struggle for life.

Mrs. Hunt Huxley: "I don't remember names of being my mother. But I heard my mother talking to old Mrs Black as I went upstairs — I did not know what it meant — intimate relations — at the time. Afterwards I found out it was the hard days. With divorce people: perhaps Hugh: who winced at her name. William also (our first black hole) about his book: rather a disappointment — an Episode.

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28th May

Soon after this, I started a headache — flashes of light raging round my eyes. Sharp pain: the pain cut into me by Ethel's voice, as she sat telling me — "you've got to listen" — about Adrian Boult, & how he ordered her to leave the room. And then to Rodmell, where the same thing happened — the light round my eyes, but as I could lie still in bed in my big airy room — the pain was much less. If it were not for the divine goodness of L. what how many times I should be thinking of death; always knocked over as I am: but now the recoveries are full of infinite relief. Moreover, on Whitmonday the sun blazes, making the grass semi-transparent. And Thea & Leonie seemed to lie all about; & I said, not once in in ecstasy, but frequently & soberly, This is happiness — Why should I feel now calmer, quieter than ever before? Partly my disposition of life: partly Nessa Roger. Clive being away so that I am not hauled about & ruffled. Partly the waves coming to an end — partly — I really dont know.

We went to Firle last night & brushed the buttercups on to our shoes. walking through the Park — A lovely country. Even counting the villas. At Monks House we had Electric light, & the Frigidaire is — today ? — working. When the Electric light fused, we could hardly tolerate aladdin lamps. so soon is the soul corrupted by comfort. Yesterday men were in the house all day boring holes for Electric fires. What more comfort can we acquire? And, though the moralists say, when one has a

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thing one at once finds it hollow. I don't at all agree. I enjoy my luxuries at every turn, & think them wholly good for what I am pleased to call the soul. Four young people smashed into Beddingham level crossing gates on Saturday & were cut in piece by the 9.40 train. One man was found stripped naked, save for the hem of one trouser. Disappointed, reading lightly Chap. by The man who died. DHL's last. Reading Son[s] & Lovers first, then the last I seem to span the measure of his power & trace his decline. A kind of Guy Fawkes dressing up grew on him it seems; in spite of the lovely silver-bright writing here & there: something sham. Making himself into a God, I suppose. I am much interrupted again by my wish to write A Knock on the Door. For some weeks I have not thought of it. It suddenly forces itself on me. I go on making up sentences, arguments, jokes &c. Then several people have written to me lately about A Room.

30th May

~~We~~ No. I have just said, it being 12.45. I cannot write any more, & indeed I cannot: I am copying the death chapter: have re-written it twice. I shall go at it again & finish it, I hope, this afternoon. But how it rolls into a tight ball the muscles in my brain! This is the most concentrated work I have ever done — & oh the relief when it's finished. But also the most interesting. ~~p. 137~~ A letter from Desmond this morning to say that he is sending his book to Putnam because, alas, it represents his life work; & though once he thought he could have done more, he now sees this is all. Moulton must take a more

p. 162 therefore Lagging. in 26 days. Shall finish by 1st July with luck.

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durable publisher than the Hogarth Press.
To annoy me, Mary H. rings up & says they are thinking of taking Southease this summer — surrounded by father & bungalows. I feel like a fish in a frying pan. but no doubt shall skip out. I dont like the idea of meeting Mary & Barbara appropriately dressed on the Downs. Happily, some menial of the Pritchards is now hammering, & I have an excuse to go up to luncheon.

June 2nd

Yes. it is very important to write a few sentences, or I shall forget how. All this correcting — all this hammer hammer hammer on the hard high road.

Ethel gave — all my ills, such as they are, spring from liver: I am a very strong woman, who needs calomel. After swallowing this terrific insult to the celebrated sensibility & nervous system, I try to find out what motive lies behind Ethel & her calomel. I think: (but then I am not a psychologist) that she wants me to be everlasting: that she wants me to be unhurt by any amount of talk about the person: that she wants to have things to her own will: that she dislikes other peoples illnesses which interfere with her vitality: that she likes to rationalise everything: that she suspects, on principle, all shrinking, subtlety & sensibility. Also she is remorseful for having sent me the picture of a sick monkey, but feels that if she can prove that the monkey was not sick but shamming, she is absolved. I dont know. This very characteristic. & akin

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to the methods she pursues about her music. Then too. to explain her lack of success, she fabricates a theory (about her kinship with the common man, & her consequent failure to attract the sophisticated, who called the tune, so that Bax Vaughan Williams &c are done. but she not.

8th June.

Dreams.

I had three lately: one of Katherine Mansfield: how we met beyond death, & shook hands; saying something by way of explanation, & friendship: yet I knew she was dead. A curious summing up, I dreamed, of what has passed since she died.

Then the dream of Daphne Sanger, & how she was proved to be the heir to the throne of England. And another dream, which L. — Charlie was there. coming in to say that Jean Stewart wants to come to tea, has caused me to forget. I diagnose, by the way, a coldness on the part of Ethel. No communications since last Tuesday save one rather formal card. I shall lie low & do nothing.

Oh dear me no — no quarrel at all.

Two notes: the woman in white stamping on bread in Kensington Gardens: the Indian looking woman ferreting in the litter box — both wild, outlandish, in shabby finery, with a hawks face — This was last week.

Wednesday June 17

L. finished the first volume of his book on Sunday: begun over 10 years ago. We shall bring it out in the autumn, & a reprint of The Village — He has been asked to give 6 Broadcast talks in the autumn on politics

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And yesterday, 22nd June - when, I think the days begin to draw in, I finished my re-typing of the Waves. Not that it is finished — oh dear no. For then I must correct the re-re-typing. This work I began on May 5th, & no one can say that I have been hasty or careless this time; though I doubt not the lapses & slovenlinesses are innumerable. A dark kind of summer. The cloud that hung over La Rochelle in April still hangs over London. In spite of this, owing to good resolutions, my little life has been adventurous & more stable than usual. There was Duncan's show: a considerable content, indeed a kind of bubbling rapture I think, in Fitzroy Street. I must ask Nessa why we are so happy. Clive is in Cannes. Julian has grown a bristling beard like a chimpanzee & is off with volumes of Pope in MS to France. Tonight we go to the Gala Opera with Christabel. Stalls costing 25/- each. I mean to record some literal conversations one of these days. Goldie wrote a qualified letter of praise about L's book: new & important ideas: the style repetitive & tedious. I distrust this, since Goldie's own mechanical style, the mould made in Greece, since considerably smoothed out, never takes my fancy: in fact I should not exaggerate if I said that I detest it: & its currency, plausibility & general first class aspect. On Wednesday tomorrow Ethel comes, & we have a party. Such is life — so gliding on. Wed 12-30.

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Last night we went to the Gala opera; sat in the stalls, 2 rows from the stage, with Christabel & a woman, who came in late, called Lady Abingdon. Her fortune has been spent on her face — perfectly aged, direct, thin. She has only a thin rigid trickle of a mind, & no play, range, or more than an inch of depth. But she is perfectly energised: knew what she was after. Christabel, to weld these incompatibles (L. &c). told stories of Queen Mary at Mrs Marshall's party — how she stopped, jerked: was most clumsy, Dressed like the upper housemaid in peacock blue. In the interval, old bibulous Maurice Baring red as a turkey cock, a survival from the Regency as I feel, came following, to clear Gossie's character: which he did — but Evan Charteris had already done it — amicably enough. He has fish eyes starting, & long equine teeth. Then Mrs Grenfell, whose chin, as C. said (C. is witty in her skimming way, & gaily fits this kind of thing) should have an inch or two hammered off. People passing. Old women like Roman matrons, ample, tightly girt; girls wand like; many large clear stoned necklaces, & long dresses. I got the feeling of this traditional English life: its garden like quality: flowers all in beds & rows: & the ceremony that has been in being so many years. Between the acts we all stood in the street: a dry brilliant night, with women all opening their cloaks: Then came dribbling through us a draggled procession of poor women wheeling perambulators & carrying small, white haired

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ragged children: going across Waterloo bridge. I watched Lady A's expression to see if she had children: but could only gather a momentary schoolboyish compunction. The women, involved in their garish feathered crowd, pushed on stolidly. There was Tom Bridges: a gallant, irresistible General, with one leg, his head on one side; off the stage and tanned, so typical, so of the distinguished & elderly Beau. He has broken many hearts said C. but I don't like him. C. said she might be summoned away before the end of Prince Igor. And so she went, liking this little amorous mystery. Lady A. stalked off without a good night or glance in our direction. Each of her nails was red & cut out like a small rose petal. L. who had been reading the Lady said this was in considered in bad taste; & that men, according to the Lady, dont like it. So home, by cab. Oh & my hair stood the strain very well. I believe I can now with care master my hair.
The woman who has been standing in the square for some 6 hours daily came yesterday with a sword, upon which she leant as she pretended to read the paper. She finally got upon the household nerves. & Miss Talbot summoned her in. She then spoke (said Nelly) very nicely: regretted having annoyed anybody. & said she was waiting for Dr. ~~Rowe~~ Rowe, of the Clinic; from which we infer that she is an ex-patient with a grievance. I was also made to waste half an hour looking at silk stockings; by Mr. Lowe, & lost my temper, on being asked to deposit 3/- a thing I [illegible] enjoy. because it makes me seem so vigorous. Now to continue Rhoda's speech. Oh this book! —

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Monday 29th June.

I had an idea for a book last night — a voyage round the world, imaginary, hunting, climbing, adventurous people, shooting tigers, submarines, flying — Swiss Family Robinson — some charades. Partly the result of L's saying if we go to America we shd. not make one bite of the cherry but go round the world. Then W. afterwards said And write an Orlando of your tour.

30th Jun

Yesterday Nina gave me the picture of Angelica. Yesterday Ethel's indignity reached its sordid & ridiculous climax.

Today Mary & Tommy dine with us & Ottoline comes in afterwards.

We go to Zardali's concert at 3. & so on.

Jack, as a wedding gift to Miss Mary Ashton, has stopped not only my allowance but Nina's & Adrian's.

Our takings, what with the press & my work, have given me a bonus of £560.

And now I must go up & find Ethel's sentimental & hysterical sheets & underline the most sentimental & hysterical passages for her benefit. And Pah — as prolific day in Shakespeare.

John Bailey is dead, aged 67. (which makes me think — no thin reference to Jack — that I will read Stendhal De l'Amour.

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July 7th

O to seek relief from this incessant correction (I am
doing the interludes) & write a few words
carelessly. Still better, to write nothing; to
tramp over the downs, blown like thistle. as
irresponsible. And to get away from this
hard knot in which my brain has been so
tight spun — I mean The Waves.
Such are my sentiments at halfpast twelve on
Tuesday July 7th — a fine day I think
& everything, so the tag runs in my head, handsome
about us. L. is now floating on the tide of
of celebrity: odd how the strings all begin to tug
at once: asked to Broadcast, asked to go to America,
asked to write the Weekly Wayfarer in the
Statesman. And I am not jealous.
But I am fearful of what I call (though this
much puzzles Fraulein Gulde) Life.
(Fr. G. is studying my works in the Brit. Mus:
& cannot be sure what life is, so writes to
ask me.) Clive is back, & as I observe
instantly on opening the door, favourably
disposed towards me. For example he says
What lovely flowers! Ethel has been
penitent after her fashion for her letter.
That is she came yesterday, after an
intermission of almost a fortnight, &
defended & explained herself in a speech
which lasted 20 minutes by my watch.
She raised her cup of tea 6 times to her lips

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but always thought of some new parenthesis or qualification & put it down untouched. Her zeal, sincerity & volubility of coarse contrivance: though I'm glad to drive my stake in firmly & so avoid complete overwhelming. I shout obloquies at her like gun shots. She takes them on her solid old body with a thud like that of an Elephant's hide. Staggers, recovers herself, & stands pendant & prominent — for she has a paunch — over me. I dominate by silence — a phenomenon to her very formidable. And off she goes at 6-45 subdued — like Pinka, L. says, when she has been grovelling in the rubbish heap. We kiss — she passionately in the hall, & while Mrs Pritchard shelters behind her door. Slightly alarmed I think. But what care I? Might be Ethel's song: & for that I like her.

I am reading Don Juan: & dispatch a biography every two days.

So no more.

Long discussion the other night between Ott: Tomlinson; Mary & ourselves upon being in the cage: Mary rampant; like a horse when a tram passes a field. Must escape. Must find a brazier man. Go to Spain. Why dont we do anything? Change our lives? Why this live with L. I with Jack? Why this hedge of telephone calls daily? Why not expose a different self?

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Tuesday July 14th

It is now twelve o'clock on the morning of July 14th — & (Bob has come in to ask me to sign a paper to get Palmer a pension. Bob says . . . mostly about his new house, making bases, can he use candle still to go to bed with, Bengy is moving in today, he is off to Italy for a month, will I send a copy of my new book to Count Moreo, all Italians are Counts, once he showed four Counts round Cambridge, Palmer . . . & so on: shuffling from foot to foot, taking his hat off & putting it on again, moving to the door & returning. O & about Desmond's book. Desmond stole some of the articles — Putnam wrote him a very severe letter —)

& I had meant to say that I am ~~so~~ now

(here Nelly comes in with a bill for 4/6 to pay for my shoes)

I had meant to say that I have just finished correcting the Hampton Court scene (This is the final correction, please God!)

But my Waves account runs, I think, as follows: —

Sept 10th to Apr 7 months.
9
3
19 months

I began it, seriously, about ~~August~~ September 10th 1929:

I finished the first version ~~in~~ April 10th 1930

I began 2nd version May 1st 1930.

I finished 2nd version ~~May~~ Feb. 7th 1931

I began to correct the 2nd version May 1st 1931 finished 22nd. June. 1931

I began to correct the typescript 25th June 1931

shall finish (I hope.) ~~28th~~ 18th July. —

Then remain only the proofs.

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~~Saturday~~ Friday 17th July.

× which I then lost.

Yes. this morning I think I may say I have finished. That is to say I have once more, for the 18th time, copied out the opening sentences. L. will read it tomorrow; & I shall open this book to record his verdict. My own opinion,—oh dear—its a difficult book. I dont know that I've ever felt so strained. And I'm nervous, I confess, about L. For one thing he will be honest, more than usually. And it may be a failure. And I can't do any more. And I'm inclined to think it good but incoherent, inspissate: one jerk succeeding another. Anyhow its laboured, compact. Anyhow I had a shot at my vision—if its not a catch, its a cast in the right direction. But I'm nervous. It may be small & finicky in general effect. Lord knows. As I say, repeating it to enforce the rather unpleasant little lift in my heart, I shall be nervous to hear what L. says when he comes out, say tomorrow night or Sunday morning, to my garden room, carrying the MS. & sits himself down & begins "Well!"

Sunday 19th July

"Its a masterpiece" said L. coming out to my lodge this morning: "And the best of your books." This note I make; adding that he also thinks the first 100 pages extremely difficult, & is doubtful how far any common reader will follow— But Lord! what a relief! I stumped off in the rain to make a little round to Rat Farm in jubilation, & am almost resigned to the fact that a great farm, with a house to be built, is now in process on the slope near Northease.

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Monks House
Rodmell.
August 1931

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Friday Aug 7th

I have just written those august words, Rodmell. August 1931
And it's as good, no better than I thought. Who else in
the whole of Sussex can say that? Weather all sorts;
river running: boat swimming; loud speaker, camera,
Electric light. frigidaire — here I run through those
material blessings which one ought to say make no
difference. Yet they do — Heal beds too — my wide
stability room to wake in, to go to bed in crowning
the [illegible] garden by the hall flowers — the garden lit by our
bright lights. We were at Oare, & I like this
country better for comparing it. And I made no
note of Sydney, save that he has been given the tip
by God — a queer feeling; spread round him an oily
quilt of superficial calm. Then I sat to Tommie.
Oh dear, what a terrific hemp strong leather
root obstinate fountain of furious individuality
shoots in one — they tampered with it, Nessa —
Tommy — pinning me there, from 2 to 4 or
6 afternoon, to be looked at; & I felt like a
piece of whalebone bent. This annoyed &
interested me, at the same time I foamed with
rage. T. was late. T. couldn't change her plans & so on.
And I had to plod along the dusty streets there.
And Rosamond Lehmann dined with Lord
David; & I liked her: & at last, at last, at
last, on Thursday 30th, we got into the
car, slammed the door, & made off. And
how satisfactory it has been, is being: I
writing Flush of a morning, half seriously to
ease my brain knotted by all that last
screw of the Waves: L. doing his broadcast &

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correcting proofs, no one coming, except Bell: no one ringing up; no one to say dinner's ready, or to be thumping about in the kitchen. Annie, composed, neat, nimble, has everything disposed of by 3 — which reminds me I must go & put the pie in the oven, I think. And lights, shadows & walks — today over to Northease & back by the marsh: almost forgiving the pink slate abortion on the Telscombe horizon. Goat Farm isn't so much of an eyesore as might have been. True, one day I was pestered into fury by Watkins, Mrs W: a her sudden curious revival of arch airs that had charmed diamond merchants in the 70ties. How odd that sudden spurt of sex in a woman of 80! How repulsive to me that flutter of rather cheap attractiveness — that value for ~~what~~ Mr Legge's good opinion — He had taken her to the Pavilion & hired a special car. "Nice eh?" she laughed, as if she were on some beach with other Jewesses 50 years ago. So it seemed. And then one sees her old & pink & wattled & overdressed, demanding amusement, pleasure, cakes, drives — but enough (as they say): I write these very words last summer, & this summer all will be over, with one smashing family tea, by the 25th. Lovely are the curves of the grey clouds sweeping; & the long barns lying; Vita wrote this morning about K M's letters & says how she longs for all poets in a garden: no more: whereas Harold is becoming, they say, Editor of a new morning paper & has resigned from the Standard. And are you fond of me? she asks.

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Monday
Aug. 10th

No I will not let this day be a bad one, though other days keep getting long. First an argument with L. at breakfast about seeing his family. The usual rather embittered argument: which deserves one of my long days: & then a headache is incipient: which is caused, partly, by Charleston: where we were very gay: & I gave away prizes: & then involved myself in one of my miserable edgy sitting tenebrous especially uneasy dialogues with Raymond: Did I ask him to stay — should I not? Nessa did: Nessa who has Roger, & will have Jean. And now we were to ask R. to come: & now I sit in the lodge this grey hot morning & will not go on with Flush, because my head; & we have a day in London tomorrow; & should begin to correct my first proofs: & perhaps shall when I've done this. No. Stay; I will not let this day be a bad one: but by what means? Quiet & control. Eating apples. Sleeping this afternoon. That's all. And now for Waves. I have now 10.45. read the first chapter of the Waves, & made no change, save 2 words & 3 commas. Yes, anyhow there is exact & to the point. I like it. And so that for once my proofs will be dispatched with a few pencil strokes. Now my mood mood: I think "I am taking my fences: we have asked Raymond. I am forging through the sea, in spite of headache in spite of bitterness. I may also get a boy." I will now write a little at Flush.

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Aug 15th

I am in rather a flutter - proof reading. I can only read a
few pages at a time. So dense when I wrote it, &
Heaven knows what virtue it all has - this pressed
Ecstatic book. All I note here though is that I feel
vibrational: yet violent impressions from Roger
Raymond, Sibyl, Vita. Sibyl came by
her own request yesterday: & I wandered after 2 hours
[illegible] barren fringe, what satisfaction she got from it.
Once she looked at the downs. The worst of being
Sibyl is that one's [illegible] very active of some
motive. "I am proving myself a woman who loves
the country": one never feels, this is what she likes,
as I do when Vita stumbles over the marsh &
hardly has a word to say. S. looks at chairs &
tables: sums one up: has a magpie's eye, a
larder of facts which she will hand on at her next
meeting. Nobody scarcely will let themselves
be themselves: & I am a sinner sometimes.
Then, as we stood at the door, she tried to make us
invite her to stay. And I smiled: why should
she want us to ask her to stay? I asked. She
had been at the Gages, again, I suppose, self invited.
As you see, S's company does not lead to
lofty reflections: does not put one on one's mettle,
except to show off. Old Vita shaggy & still
writing another novel: but as careless about it all
as ever. Eddy had written to abuse A-B. S.
She was annoyed: then tore up his letter.
Harold is starting a new paper Action on
Oct. 1st: costing 2d. Cold, wet, light at
luncheon: the

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cat kittened in the coal hole; the valuable spaniel bitch died in childbed next door. A wet wild August, the coldest for 14 years: & the farmers here burning their hay. Meanwhile the country is in the throes of a crisis. Great Events are brewing. Maynard visits Downing Street & spreads sensational rumours. Are we living then through a crisis; & am I fiddling? & will future ages, as they say, behold our predicament (financial) with horror? Sometimes I feel the world desperate: then walk among the downs. Last night, after tea, after thunder—saw the valley various, tender, flushing, evanescent.

I stood by the gate & watched Asheham hill
Cloud & kindle like the emerald in.
And all round the hills lay, low in cloud.

Sunday, Aug. 16th

I should really apologise to this book for using it as I am doing to write off my aimlessness; that is I am doing my proofs—the last chapter this morning—& find that I must stop after half an hour, & let my mind spread, after these moments of concentration. I cannot write my life of Flush, because the rhythm is wrong. I think The Waves is anyhow tense & packed; & hence it screws my brain up like this. And what will the reviewers say? And my friends? They cant, of course, find anything very new to say.

L. is in the house making his index

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& printing the photographs we developed last night.
The reason why Colefax is so dull is that she never feels or thinks for herself. That's why I should suffocate of dust if she spent a night here. Also she is for ever collecting facts about one, not from interest, but from curiosity. It's a warning not to go to places like Argyll House again, because one is expected to make some return.*

It's a good idea I think to write ~~~~ biographies: to make them use my powers of representation reality accuracy; & to ~~~~ use my novels simply to express the general, the poetic. Flush is serving this purpose. We had a perfectly happy day yesterday. I set up some of Dante's poems in the new room; walked on the marshes. L. cut the apple trees; it was a lovely day — indeed this broken weather has the merit of ~~~~ an extraordinary capricious beauty. I doubt that I have ever seen the downs lovelier. I am in a fix though about Ethel, who with considerable brutality to back her, asks if she may come here. When people — G.L.D for instance — put us off, we are almost shocked; & then feel an ~~amazed~~ amazed relief. Is it possible that there is some one who does not want to see us? such royalty we have become — in our set, as Ethel says. She annoys me by telling Lady Crack that I live in a set, & am a recluse. Now, alas, I must back to Bernard (on P's death)

The poor woman today Wednesday writes a pathetic letter about other summers & regrets; "how all the same they drank (A & she) their delights to the full & the sight of us tho' it stirred their sorrows comforted her."

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one of Sibyl's sayings, or remarks: "Ah, if only Arthur & I could afford a country cottage" — with her Rolls Royce & her chauffeur at the door.

Monday Aug. 17

Well now, at being just after 12.30 I have put the last corrections in The Waves: done my proofs; & they shall go tomorrow — never, never to be looked at again by me, I imagine.

Wednesday: Aug 19

My proofs did go: went yesterday; & I shall not see them again.

Sept 1st

And so a few days of bed & headache, overpowering sleep, sleep descending insuperable as I tried to read Judith Paris: Judith Paris, then [illegible]. A note on Judith Paris: its a London museum book. Hugh bouncing with [illegible] enthusiasm — a collection of keepsakes bright beads — unrelated. Why? No central feeling anywhere — only 'I'm so vital — so big — so creative" True, its competent enough; space in the wording — but words without roots. Yes that's it. All a [illegible] collection of bright objects to be swept up. Scott: a note. A pageant. And I knew the man (I forget his name) with hit the mark — So I'm not excited. Almost incredible that my father should have taken this scene seriously. But I think some roots — A perfectly sincere desire [illegible] to amuse, now & then ruffled (but [illegible] seldom!) by some raid from the sub-conscious only on the harmless Mr. Rowena, Rebecca. hairdresser ornaments — Madame Tussaud

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than jewels - its the degenerates intensity - all flat, daubed And I think! ~~for~~ to cut him like him, better than Hugh.

Question of morality. That we are all moralists - with a temporary standard - My anger that S. would be more intense partly the result of England's crisis this summer. (If summer it can be called.) Man came this morning when I was in my night gown to put up Nessa's tiles in the top room. L. in London. Joyce's birthday. Hot still September morning - Rooks gathering, lowering

3rd Sept. I am talking, this is the last day - my weeks holiday, with very good results. My brain is soft & warm & fertile again, I feel fresh & free with energy for talk - &c. I can even envisage 'seeing' people without a clutch & a shudder. Odd how I drink up rest - how I become dry & parched like a withered grass - how then I become green - succulent. By the way, Elizabethan prose is magnificent: & all that I love most at the moment. I walked ... Latin ... as in my natural element. Surely this is a richer instrument than Scott or the 18th Century. We listened to a Bach concert with the clouds thickening purple over Caburn, the lights spraying, & the pale ... glow in the chalk pit. At one moment the brown horse stampeded - flinging out their great legs wildly. The worst of this is that my brain gets too fast - overflows. Waiting for breakfast I read Montaigne this morning & found a passage about the ... ... - their ... - what I ... opposed to Squire's remarks & so made up a

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whole chapter of my Tap at the Door & whatever else, just when I were hoping to let my mind slide off onto a second Common Reader, & the Elizabethans. No letter from Vita, to whom I wrote from my bed; & none from Nessa to whom I sent £50. A few letters from American lunatics which I must answer, must I? — & stop writing. Will I write a statement what I believe for the American Nation. No. But what do I believe? Other people do this sort of thing. Why not I? And what was I saying? Oh I was annoyed with Desmond usual sneer at Mrs Dalloway — wool gathering. I was inspired to make up several phrases about Desmond's own prowess — none of which, I suppose, will ever be fired off in print. His ~~world~~ worldliness, uncertainty, decorum as a writer: his soft supple ways. His audience of teaparty ladies & gentlemen. His timidity. How he wraps everything in flannel. (Browning said this of a cold morning in Paris). And there's truth in what I say of Desmond, not only spite. Then his ridiculous hesitations & nervousness as a writer; about publishing. His perpetual condescension. His new permanent stoop in the back. I mean his aloofness — in the bad sense. I mean he never takes a nettle by the leaves: always wears gloves. His garrulity. Well, let me hope that all his 8 volumes will fail, that he won't be able to pay his income tax & that Michael will be eaten by leopards. Then I shall meet him & my eyes will fill with tears. But it's true — a snub — even praise — from Desmond, depresses me more than the ~~or~~ ~~the~~ 50 downright anger of Arnold Bennett ~~it's~~ it sapps my vitality.

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I open this book again to record the fact that this is the 3rd of September. The battle of Dunbar: the battle of Worcester, & the death of Cromwell. A heavy flagging windy cloudy day with breadths of sun: not actually raining. It's odd how I always remember father saying that at Olves on this day, & how I am always writing something in a diary on this day & generally it is crisp & clear.

Tuesday Sept 15th

I have come up here, trembling under the sense of complete failure—I mean The Waves—I mean Hugh Walpole doesn't like it—I mean John L. is about to write to say he thinks it bad—I mean L. accuses me of sensibility verging on insanity—I mean I am creatively depressed—& already taking refuge the head & turning back of my old friend Fight fight. Never mind. Here I need not disguise my turmoil of feelings. Lord how I hate that Hugh Shd. be running about London saying the new VW. is a disappointment—all about nothing—exquisitely written of course. Ought I not then to say that Bruce Thinks— Oh well. So let me try to give up weighing opposite impressions. Anyhow my mind is crammed with books, & Lord, I tried to speak the truth, bombastic as the remark sounds, wrung it drop by drop from my brain. So essentially I am not hollowed. But The Waves, I predict marks my decline in reputation.

This was true: Hugh wrote to say he thinks it "unreal". It beats him.

Oh but this morning I'm like a bee on the ivy bloom — cant write for pleasure. John says "But I loved it, truly loved it, & was deeply impressed & amazed by its achievement in an entirely new method. .... There seems to me only the thinnest wall between such a novel & poetry. You somehow maintain the ~~f~~ speed of prose & the intensity of poetry. . ." And its very difficult he adds; & so on. But my brain is flushed & flooded & I'm at once inspired to write a Letter to a Young Poet

Lord what a weathercock — no a wave of emotion is in me.

Sept 19th

And the last few days have been heavenly — in this at last some heat: & then, with this book done — for I dont feel much anxiety now — think that John has hit off the alluvial view — I'm calm; — oh & walk. — Oh & have to record the horror of 2 bungalows on the tops of the hills. Yes — this iniquity is being inflicted on the Downs for ever by our 'prospective Labour Candidate' He shant have my vote. I swept off into dreams of a house far away in Dorsetshire. But O — again — how happy I am — how calm, for the moment how sweet life is with L. here, in its regularity & order, & the garden & the room at night & music & my walks & writing easily & interestedly at Donne of a morning, & poems all about me. We come to read poetry with intensity. bought Skelton at Tunbridge Wells. For we went to the Easedales one fine hot day. saw the stuffed wolf: & I meant

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new charge for Angelica's birthday party. George & Margaret yesterday.

Sept 21st

Here am I writing about Donne, & we have 'gone off the Gold Standard' this morning. Maynard Kahn like people in the war. We sat talking of Economics & politics. Guards out. Tower defended (this a joke — this paper) Telephone — late edition of the paper. We're off, & I write about Donne. Yes; & what could I do better, if we are ruined, & if everybody had spent their time writing about Donne we should not have gone off the Gold Standard — that's my version of the greatest crisis since the war — gabble gabble go the geese, who cant lay golden eggs.

Sept 22nd.

And now Holtby says "It is a poem, more completely than any of your other books, of course. This is most ... What can move deeply into the human heart ... perhaps than even to the Lighthouse'...." & though I copy the sentences, because it is in the chart of my temperature, Lord, as I say, that temperature which was deathly low this time last week, & then fever high, doesnt seem normal. I suppose I'm safe; I think people can only repeat. And I've forgotten so much. What I want is to be told that this is solid & means something. What it means I myself shant know till I write another book. And I'm the hare, a long way ahead of the hounds my critics

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Sunday Sept. 27th

Lyn & the Kingsley Martins are in the house, & I have crept out here, as I say, to write letters. But talking jangles the nerves at the back of my head. And we had the Easedales too. "Mr E— was one of those jealous gentlemen, & so he left me" silence on my part. "I was very young, & should have taken a stronger line!" "How terrible that a friendship like that should have been broken off!" said Joan. And we went round the garden. Ethel must be in fine feather. General, & I think Sinclair praise of the Wreckers. I telegraphed—dont want to write. Dotty's mother dead. Vita going off abroad with her. And we shall publish on the 8th in state of the G.E.: dont expect sales anyhow.

Wednesday Sept. 30th

I have come up here on this the last evening to clear up papers. All is softly grey. Lime yellow Dahlias are burning on the edge of the terrace. I have been over to Asheham, in the clear pale autumn afternoon, along Mandrill walk, which we walked the night of our marriage—How proud I was of my new despatch box, I remember! So its over, this summer too; & I regret it. & want to stay on, & soothe my mind with (here a wretched little post comes in) with Elizabethan books. Instead we go up tomorrow, & admit the lift of my heart tell me that strain, about The Waves, friends, reviewers, sales, &c. will then begin to make a fiddle string in my side, stretched tight, on which lots of people will carelessly twang this winter— No help for it— So it always is with a book out.

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And it will be out in one week tomorrow. But I am slightly less naked than usual, as I've had 3 outside opinions & shan't I suppose get any very great variety of praise or blame. I must make up my mind about the autumn Cap, & my bearing. And do some quiet work: & see people not so ~~—~~ wearily. But here I am saying the summer is over — the wet, driven, rather headachy summer — so August was. September improved. How happy I was walking about Sussex, up here, how happy a ~~14~~ dozen times on solitary walks, in what a rage the day I found Hancock's horror building on the hill, & then we had many & many a game of bowls, & there was the great financial crisis, & the then going to Dotty & the Easedales, & the tremendous talk carnival — which I went through with that lips — I mean looking for no pleasure — last week end. And now apple baskets are filling in the drawing room. I must seriously set to & destroy & man together two months of papers.

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5th Oct.

52 Tavistock Sqr.

A note: today I am all trembling with pleasure—cant go on with my Letter—because Harold Nicolson has rung up to say The Waves is a masterpiece. Ah hah—so it wasn't all wasted then—I mean this vision I had here has some force upon other minds. Now for a cigarette, & then a return to sober composition.

Well, to continue this egotistic diary: I am not terribly exalted: no: at arms length more than usual all this talk, because if the W. is anything it is an adventure which I go on alone: & the dear old Lit Sup: who twinkles & beams & patronises—a long, & for the Times, kind & outspoken review—dont stir me very much. Nor Harold in Action either. Yes; to some extent: I shd. have been unhappy had they blamed, but Lord, how far away I become from all this; & we're jaded too, with people, with doing up parcels. I wonder if its good to feel this remoteness—that is, that the W. is not what they say. Odd, that they (the Times) shd. praise my characters when I meant to have none. But I'm jaded; I want my marsh, my down, & quiet waking in my airy bedroom. Broadcasting tonight: to Rodmell tomorrow. Next week I shall have to stand the racket.

Friday.

Really, this unintelligible book is being better 'received' than any other. A note in the Times proper—the first time this has been allowed me. And it sells—how unexpected, how odd that people can read that difficult grinding stuff!

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14th a note. For since the Waves my brain wont stand
hard writing—writing that must fetch a compass. I'm
muscularly strained. So I stop my Letter to John
& note that the W. has beaten all my books:
sold close on 5000: we are reprinting: So far,
save for Hayward & Ethel, no letters. None
aging pretenders have written. This silence always
lasts a week or two. The reviews I think the
warmest yet. And so on. But Vita
found it desperately dull—anyhow for 100
pages. What shall I say to Virginia? I
Cant get through it. Up rings Dotty.
Cant get through it. Two hours later: "I'm
getting along better." Still, she finds it
absolutely unintelligible: all one person speaking:
profound loneliness of the soul: will never
like it as much as the others. Dear me,
I spent 20 minutes dashing off a book:
talk—so much I need random
rollicking humour—Oh what a
Grind that was! It comes over me
now. Literally I have a pain in my
head—but my head has many pains—
when I try to stretch another book—
And yet I come I encourage the
Tree. But help help. Stop Stop!
Cry to my brain. Dont torture
me again. Luncheon tonight &
supper with Vita L & Ethel at the
Eiffel Tower afterwards.

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Conversation last night. Stulik at the Eiffel Tower.

"I am talking about Schnitzler: I tell you he had six potatoes here & a bag of flour. He said "Give them to my people. I do not want them. He had six potatoes & a bag of flour. He said "My people are starving. I do not want your alms"...

~~E~~ E.S.: But they have not heard of Schnitzler.

~~In~~ We are not music al ... The English are not artists. You belong to the only race where every man one meets in the street is an artist...

Of course ~~they~~ these people have heard of Schnitzler...

And he said Take them. I do not want them. Give them to the people who are starving. He had six potatoes & a bag of flour."...

Stulik has had a fit & was mildly drunk.

My heart beat when I saw you — (bowing to me with his hand on his heart) come in .. It is long years since you used to come here. You lived in Bedford Square — you had a studio — & there was Lady Otto — she used to come — And my heart leapt, Sir, when I saw you again after all these years. When you came into the room, I felt....

Going through contortions like one swimming with his arms crossing themselves on his breast — Those that they whistle & Malcolm Bullock in — Come. E. held forth about Parsifal: we sparred — Dined on pale blue with white stars penned with Inky pen. And some of the W. was vigorous & even beautiful. & active & absurd & extreme: & youthful: and some song we had tried to utter been choked.

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Saturday
Oct 17th

More notes on the Waves. The sales, these past 3
days have fallen to 50 or 20: after the great flare up
when we sold 500 in one day, the brushwood has
died down, as I foretold. (Not that I thought we should
sell more than 3,000) What has happened is that
the library readers cant get through it & are sending
their copies back. So, I prophesy, it will
now dribble along till we have sold 6000
& then almost die, yet not quite. For
it has been received, as I may say, ~~with~~ flattering the
flock phrases without vanity, with applause.
All the provinces read enthusiastically. I am rather, in
a sense, as the M's would say, touched. The
unknown provincial reviewers say with almost one
accord, here is Mrs Woolf doing her best work;
it cant be popular: but we respect her for
so doing; & find the Waves positively gripping.
I am in danger, indeed, of becoming our leading
novelist, & not with the highbrows only. To
show how slow a book is, not only do Vita &
Dolly find the first 100 pages boring in the
extreme, but I have as yet (10 days after
publication) had only 3 letters about it.
Nessa's enthusiasm is the brightest spot. And,
to annotate further, the lack of sales has
had the providential effect of steadying &
quieting me, so that I can get back to work
& have already lost the flush & flutter of
what seemed like complete success. So now,
what shall I work at? So many works
hover over me.

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20th Oct.

I trotted out yesterday & laid in a stock of Elizabethans. I should like to write a chapter called Some Elizabethans as prelude to the 2nd Common Reader. I had a visit from Peter Lucas t'other night. No, he had not read the W. But he has written an Epic. He is working as usual like a miner — bright red all over. Egotistic — i.e. charming, boyish, hard, unperceptive, not a writer I mean, though set on writing, & indeed has a play being accepted. Both our books move slowly; but L's I suspect with a giant's foot, like an elephant through the undergrowth. Laski says, as reviewers say these things, it is a masterpiece. We makers of masterpieces remain very calm, very well content. We went to the Motor Show, for instance, last Saturday (autumn deepening) & approved the Star, which indeed we could buy if we wished. It's a queer reversal. There's Lottie out of a place, & Mrs Stant won't accept fees as places aren't to be had. How things have spun these 2 or 3 years then! Oh it's blue gauze over my skylight — please God it stays blue over our week end, the blessed Rodmell week end. Vaguely looking for houses again & turning over plans for removing. All house pale though before this one. I'm asked to be godmother to Noel Richards' daughter. Yet she wasn't done love. Election rampant. Plomer & doBree dined the other night. He a terrible second rate man: his grandfather the pawnbroker in Vanity Fair.

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Oh but I have been much miserable - damped & disheartened — there is no exasperation — because the Lit Sup. only gave half a column of belittlement to After the Deluge. Not that I should have cared more than a moments damn at them for the usual insignificant spiteful methods — wreaking their politics upon books they dont agree with. But L says — & honestly believes — that this hurts an end to the book — yes he says no less than that. He says his ten years work are wasted, & that he sees no use in going on. His argument is that he wrote this book for the wider public: that this public is at the mercy of Librarians: that Librarians take their orders from the Lit Sup: that they judge by the length of the review: that no librarian will advise spending 15/- ~~on~~ on the strength of this review: so that, however Laski & the Experts may applaud, as they do, in the weeklies, his book is dead: his work wasted. He remains with a public of experts who are poor: his sales wont reach 500 in 6 months & so on. For my own part I think there a very curious illustration of his psychology. On Sunday he told me that this ~~was~~ was bound to happen: yet we have seldom been happier — True he said he expected one col. or one & ½ of abuse instead of ½: — Oh but the arguments which we have beaten out I daresay for 6 hours, walking in the sq're, sitting over the fire — utterly cloud my mind. It's his curious pessimistic temper: something deeper

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than reason, strangling, many coiled, that one cant deal with. Influenza has exactly the same effect, liberating the irrational despondency which I see in all Woolves, connected with centuries of oppression. The world against us &c. How can one laugh off the ½ column therefore? And when I say this morning incautiously, "I'm reviewed in the Mr. Guardian" L. says "Is it a long review?" And I say, feeling like a mother to a hurt & ~~crying~~ miserable little boy, Yes. Lord what human beings are! Now it pours; & are we to go to Rodmell?

Oct 30th

Happily that moodiness of L's is over. Other things have intervened, & finance & some sale. And the General Election which has returned I think 26 labour members to Parliament. But as I went to James's to hear the results, was in the midst of a chattering crowd (Nessa Nansen drunk) my head aches. I rubbed the ache in dining at the Woolf family party last night. Cant write. Cant read. Oh — yesterday we made an offer for 47 Gordon Sqre — a house where we may die; for its a 24 years lease. Strange t awaken there again. In order that these notes may remain solid I make them; but cannot comment.

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Monday 16th Nov.

But we are not to live & die in 47. The Bedford Estate wont house a publisher; would create a precedent: vans would stop at the door. Unexpectedly complaisant, though. Mr Upton told us that we may stay on here past our term: the side of the Sq— is to be pulled down; but times are bad for building; & they will treat us with consideration. So we stay on, anyhow this next year. With John doubtful (I murmur this in secret) this is wisest so: & Lord, how I love the chance of any escape — from what? to what?

I'm disoriented; have been to the City & seen St Bartholomews. Came back to meet Vita. Vita rings up; has to take Dotty to a nursing home, so cant come: my evening spoilt — mind cant settle. What's to become of Lottie, still out of a place? Nessa — will Anne have her? I am reading Clive's book.

Now I will give myself the pleasure — shall I? — of copying a sentence or two from Morgan's unsolicited letter on The Waves: —

"I expect I shall write to you again when I have re-read The Waves. I have been looking in it & talking about it at Cambridge. Its difficult to express oneself about a work which one feels to be so very important, but I've the sort of excitement over it which comes from believing that one's encountered a classic."

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I daresay that gives me more substantial pleasure
than any letter I've had about any book — Yes.
I think it does, coming from Morgan. For
one thing it gives me reason to think that I shall
be right to go on along this very lonely path.
I mean in the city today I was thinking of another
book — about shopkeepers, & public-ans, with
low life scenes: & I ratified this sketch by
Morgan's judgment. Wadie agrees too.
Oh yes, between 50 & 60 I think I shall write
out some very singular books, if I live. I mean
I think I am about to embody, at last, the
exact shapes ~~I was~~ ~~incited~~ my brain holds.
What a long toil to reach this beginning — if
the Waves is my first work in my own style!
To be noted, as curiosities of my literary history:
I sedulously avoid meeting Roger & Lytton whom
I suspect do not like the Waves. I
suspect that it is dubbed a failure also by
Ottoline, Colefax, Mary, & Christabel.
Lord David does not care for it, nor
Hugh Walpole. I sit tight here in my
fastness, only sedulously avoiding any
meeting with Roger & Lytton. Why do I
imagine that they are both hostile
towards me, because of the Waves? This is
unlikely — No; I do liked Lytton for
writing Q.V. I remember
But oh the happiness of this life—

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Nov. 16th

I was thinking to myself today, few people in Cheapside can be saying "this is too good to be true—that L. & I are going to dine alone tonight."

Then of course, for no reason, L. is rather silent—sad at tea; Vita does not come; I cant get on with Philip Sidney; & so my perfect crystal globe has a shadow crossing it. L. is now printing; & perhaps dinner will be all I planned. And if its not, my happiness is too substantial to be tarnished. But dinner was very good

I am working very hard—in my way, to furbish up 2 long Elizabethan articles to front a new Common Reader: then I must go through the whole long list of those articles. I feel too, at the back of my brain, that I can devise a new critical method; something far less stiff & formal than these Times articles. But I must keep to the old style in this volume. And how, I wonder, could I do it? There must be some simpler, subtler, closer means of writing about books, as about people, could I hit upon it. {The Waves has sold more than 7,000. The Deluge is selling very well}

Theres always somebody playing a concertina if one has the window open at the back—or kind of bagpipe concertina. That reminds me. I scribble a page of what is called, I think, Diary or Calendar every morning before setting to upon Harvey, in which I catch such reflections—& shall one day publish them in a square grey-papered covered volume, very thin: a kind of copy book, with a 6d calendar of the month stamped upon it.

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Tuesday 17th Nov.

Yes I forget, why do I want to write here, what do I want to say? with half an hour to lunch. A foggy morning; & Vita rings up; & I say (chiefly owing to my dream that she had gone off with someone, very markedly, at a party, in a small house, whose room I was about to make into my study by knocking down a wall — I still see it: I hear Nessa saying She's tired of you: then my teeth broke; then one day Vita went off triumphantly with somebody, being sick of me; & so I woke, about 4.30, & decided that I would be firm if she rang me up & asked me to lunch with her & Gerald Heard. In fact she did do this: & I was firm; & she was charming & warm & frank & friendly, & said she would come in this evening then, as she so much wanted to see me. Really my firmness was due to my dream. But it is odd that I'm really, I believe, ostracised by some young friends, because of the Waves, & lifted to the highest pinnacle by others, because of it? Dadie, for instance, & Goldie: but Morgan is the only one, either side, that matters.

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Friday Xmas morning

Lytton is still alive this morning. We thought that he could not live through the night. It was a moonlit night & Nessa rang up at 10 to say that he had taken milk & tea after an injection. When she went to Hungerford yesterday they were in great despair sitting round. He had taken nothing for 24 hours & was only half conscious. This may be the turn, or may mean nothing. We are lunching with the Keyneses. Now again all one's sense of him flies out & expands & I begin to think of things I shall say to him. So strong is the desire for life — the triumph of life.

A soft misty morning.

After writing the last page, Nov. 16th, I could not go on writing without perpetual headaches: & so took a month of lying down: have not written a line; have read Faust, Coningsby &c. & seen Clive, Christabel, Nessa, Miss Bowen, Alice Ritchie: until these last 14 days when I heard about Lytton. He has been ill a month. I have lived through again all grades of feeling: then the telephone: then Angelica coming; then going to see James: then coming here last Tuesday, a dark drive, & tea reminding me of Lytton. Brighton yesterday. All very quiet, misty; a blue sky & white clouds last night. Talk to L. last night about death — its stupidity: what he would feel if I died. He might give up the Press; but how one must be natural. And the feeling of age coming over us: & the hardship of losing friends: & my dislike of the younger generation: & then I reason: how one must understand. And we are happier now

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Sunday Dec. 27th

Last night – I go to Mrs Dedman to telephone –
"the improvement continues". I say that must mean
that the stout Strachey constitution has
triumphed. For 48 hours L. has been better. & now,
Nessa says, he realises that he is better, &
eats; whatever he is allowed. I am therefore
freely imagining a future with my old serpent
to talk to, to laugh at, to abuse: I shall read his
book on the 17th: I shall stay at Ham Spray. I shall
tell him how L. & I sobbed on Christmas Eve.
But this page is one of my trials to test my
brain. If successful I shall go out to the Lodge
tomorrow, light my electric fire, & potter about.
I am cross with Desmond for talking about
dreaming subjectivity & the Waves: I ~~am~~
have been making phrases about his damnable
febrility – he who neither loves nor hates. And this,
in short I'm in a healthy condition.
remarkably. After the First. L. cant come in:
I've been pacing the terrace. The sun is flooding
the downs. The leaves of the plant in the
window are transparent with light. My
brain will be jelly. We shall go to Lewes
tomorrow. All is again serene, though
I still have some trepidation about the
telephone. Lunching with the Keynes, "Is he
They took Lytton philosophically. She had 3
alive?" Lydia asked. Maynard said that Lyttons
helps of turkey.

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last relations had been very thin — she was not sure when he saw him last. He was not really changed: nothing of importance had happened. They did not go to Hampstead because Lydia disapproves of the immorality of Carrington. She is a dog in the manger. The relationships are hypocritical. And what d'you feel about immortality, Maynard? I asked. "I am an idealist," said Maynard, & therefore on the whole I suppose I think that something may continue. Clearly the brain is the only ~~living~~ existing thing — matter does not exist. It follows therefore . . . but one is very vague." So, more or less he said. And L. said death was stupid like a motor accident. And M. said that Mrs Courtauld was dying, might be dead that moment. And he wished one could die at once: there should be deaths arranged for couples simultaneously. Like humanly. Lydia, me & Leonard. 'But he always supposed he would die before Lydia, & I, I said, before L. Leonard. Then Lydia & Leonard will marry. They will combine all their dogs. (Dogs were wandering about.) And so home. And I kissed Maynard. And they are coming to tea.

I can write so far, if this is to be called not an allusion of this old pen, without racing or pain. But when it comes to the screw — the screw that I give, Desmond, Doesnt —

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Tuesday Dec. 29th

Lytton is, if anything, better. I need not ring up Nessa today, which is a matter of exquisite relief. It seems as if he were now to be seriously ill with ups & downs for some time. They say this positively not typhoid, but ulcerated colon. Well, we have lived through every grade of feeling—how strong, how deep—more than I guessed, though that cavern of horror is well known to me. ~~After~~ Soon the whole being can suffer no more: I cant feel anything. I say as I lift the receiver, sitting on Miss Dexleys bed, & eying with intensity her shining table & the two pale blue wine glasses: the tea caddy; & the gilt framed picture of a Victorian lady. There was also a little pile of books, a few letters, & the Dog World. ~~The~~ In these acute states emotions are much simplified—there is none of the complexity that I feel this morning about Lytton, when I expect him to recover. I feel arrogance, humour, the desire to laugh with him.

This a bitter windy morning. & Caburn, when I came in very white with snow. Now it is black. Shall I ever 'write' again? And what is writing? The perpetual converse I keep up. I've stopped it these 5 or 6 weeks. That excitement, which becoming a habit, is over. Why take to it again? I am dispassionate. Books come gently surging round me, like icebergs. I could write a book of caricatures. Christabels story of the Hall Caine

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suggested a caricature of country house life, with the red-brown pheasants. Then there's Flush: there's the knock on the door: there's the appalling novel: there's Common Reader... there's my Letter to a Poet. But I'm deficient in the excitement: dont feel, as I did after many such illnesses. If I dont write I shall whizz into extinction like an electric globe fused.

That makes me think that our 3 black swans came last night. I will finish this book, & begin another for 1932. And now I have a vast choice of reading matter, & feel no sort of inclination to reply to the flattering invitation of Chattos that they should reprint my books. So Faber wishes too. And L. has sold his 450: & I 9400 — what figures!

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Here is to be quite frank the 1st Jan—1932, but I will pretend that it is still 1931: so that I may spend the 25 minutes to lunch writing here. I will bring a new book down tomorrow. The truth is I cannot write—but must scribble. My attempt to polish up John's letter in the Lodge yesterday was a failure. Am I more severe, deeper, less of a flibbertigibbet now than I was, so that writing exacts a closer screw?—& my head is twisted with the effort? I think that possible. Anyhow, I must sail over the 7 days left here as smoothly, valiantly, serenely as may be. And use this page to sail on.

Waves have sold 9,850—Deluge 440 (?)

Yesterday we had Keyneses & Bells to tea. Mrs Courtauld is dead. Lytton, as I must believe, very slowly mending. And I must repay a vow made in my sorrow—to send £10 yearly to old Sophie. Only when my brain dry up I feel nervous. Action is dead—O these days—that's my present curse. And one must learn to overcome it somehow. This irregular sharp bark is the devil. Ears stopped?

Clive as bright as a bullfinch. We talked of going to bed in front of America. And of Desmond's maniacal lies—"I have posted the article" when he hasn't written it. And of the Stracheys—Nessa's description of the lounge at the Bear filled with Stracheys reading detective novels in silence. In comes Ralph. Julia. "Would you like to come, Pernel?"

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Pernel struggles heavily & goes to get ready. "Gently fading away?" says Olivia. Ralph nods. Dorothea is summoned to be with Carrington, who will commit suicide they think. She leaves. Wires for a little bag with some money that she took out of John's dressing gown — he might be annoyed. A man appears with the bag. Is this yours? They look — find £300 in notes inside. (I am now stopped against the dogs: but its difficult to write stoppered: & foolish: & an extravagant demand on me by Miss Dixey: if a knock were to come I should not hear — & the dog opposite may stop barking.) Carrington moving about scarcely knowing people: Pippa violently self-controlled: Saxon helping by — I forget what: Tommie helping, too, but summoned to comfort his parents for the death of Gannow in an air spill; & the Stracheys, all grey, all woollen, all red nosed, swollen eyed, logical, quiet, exact, doing cross-word puzzles: thinking of Lytton. And that afternoon (Christmas Eve) Lytton said "If its only keeping me alive a little longer dont." And so they did nothing: but then he drank tea & milk with brandy & enjoyed them, & the Dr. happily had some serum, injected it, & so the turn — the turn they call it — began. This is a scene I can see: & see Lytton too, always reasonable, clear, giving his orders: & dying as he thought: & then, as reasonably, finding some strength returning, deciding to live. And L. & I sobbing here. And I expect Nessa & Clive sitting over the fire late, with some tears, at Seend.

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During the last days here. they have been putting up a great erection of girders on the bank opposite Asheham. Is this an overhead railway or an engine house? So another view of the downs is lost for ever. And Annie repeats vague gossip that there is to be a series of factories between Newhaven & Lewes: are we doomed to go — or to stay on & be wormed out of all walks all views, & become crusted over with villas?